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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



[THE POOR ORPHAN.]

## AILEEN'S LOVE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"  
"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who  
Married Them?" &c., &c.

### CHAPTER V.

#### THE WATCHER.

Now appears the stately castle,  
Wide is flung the gilded door,  
Bow thee to the gracious lady  
Who befriends and helps the poor.

THE cold glare of the winter moon shone full on a savage, haggard face, unshorn, unwashed, with ragged felt cap, pulled low over the scowling brow. Aileen looked up frankly into the gloomy, sinister eyes of the man, and as she pulled the outer bell of the castle gate, she said:

"Arrah, but it's a cowld night to be standin' out o' doors, Patrick Maguire."

"I'm watching," the man said, with a grim smile.

"Watching" responded Aileen. "For whom, thin, Patrick Agra?"

"For a son of the Athlones that set off to walk this night from Athlone. Sure, it's a telegram I had an hour since from one who watched him start. The telegram only tould me the price of corn was raised, but I knew what it meant."

Aileen asked no more. These murderous men were her friends. She had grown up amongst them from childhood, and she did not wish them to criminate themselves too deeply in the presence of Edward Athlone.

"I hope when he comes he will give you a half-crown or a crown, Patrick Agra, for ould acquaintance sake," she said, gaily.

"And what for are you going up to the castle, Aileen? The young lord is at home, and a troop of his devilish London friends, who turn night into day, drink wine and play at billiards all night. It's ill for a pretty colleen to be going up to that fiend's castle at nine o'clock at night, when those young devils are about."

"Sure, I've my aunt with me," responded Aileen, though the poor sowl is as deaf as a post. She's going up to see her niece, who is scullery maid at the castle. She's never been in this countrhy before; she's a Sligo woman, but she's going to stop at the castle a week and help with the cooking at Christmas. Her luggage is coming on in the morning."

The gate now was opened by a neat man in dark blue and gold buttons, the livery of the park and lodge keepers of Athlone Castle, where everything was conducted on a certain scale of magnificence.

Aileen passed through, and Athlone, in his strange disguise, followed, holding down his head, and with a strange sense of wrong and humiliation at his heart. The idea of being hated so at the place of his birth, watched for on his return to spend the Christmas holidays by men with revolvers in their hands, was hurtful to the honest, manly pride of a noble heart and truthful nature.

He had not been to Ireland since he was a

child of fourteen years. He had not thought very much about the country of his birth; he had passed most of his Eton vacations at the earl's country seat in Surrey, Leighton Park, or else at the town mansion in St. James's Park. He had been in the army, and sold out since his father shortened his allowance in order to give more to his favourite son, Lord Athlone.

Then he had become a painter; he had great artistic gifts; he had actually painted, exhibited and sold his pictures, and the earl, whose pride was of the old-fashioned, uncompromising sort, was fiercely angry with him on account of what he was idiotic and brutish enough to term his "low" tastes.

Then Edward Athlone was in love forty fathoms deep with Lady Emily Fairleigh, a proud, penniless beauty who would have adored him to distraction had he been Lord Athlone, and as it was really loved him very much for a worldly London girl of fashion, so Edward had hardly given Ireland or the Irish a thought during all these years.

Yes, he felt ashamed of that—ashamed of his father's persecutions; he was fired with a very strong desire now to make himself loved by these people who hated him only because he was the son of the Earl of Clonell. He walked on slowly while Aileen was repeating her impromptu tale of the scullery-maid and the assistant cook and the deaf woman from Sligo to the lodgekeeper.

Presently Aileen came up with him again. Both of them were silent as they passed under the arching trees of the avenue. Then a troupe of dogs ran out and barked. Aileen called to them gently, and it seemed that the sound of

her voice soothed them like magic, for they began to whine an affectionate welcome.

Athlone Castle was a grand, grim edifice, which dated from the days of the Stuarts. It was turreted, and had a moat and a drawbridge; it stood frowning against the cold background of the wintry heavens, with the moon glancing on the snow that covered the lawn in front.

"I will stay here, sir, until you are safe indoors, and then I will return."

As Aileen spoke she established herself under a tree on the lawn.

"But I swear you shall not," said Edward Athlone, with energy. "I owe you my life, Aileen."

"I owed you mine, sir, when I was a child. I have paid back the debt this night, and thank Heaven for it, but I must not go on to the castle."

"Aileen, I am an earl's son, but I am a poor dog. How much money do your people want to pay off these arrears of rent; do you know?"

"Two hundred pounds, Mr. Athlone."

"I have just fifteen pounds in the world and I owe fifty," the young man said, bitterly, "and my father, if he thought I wished to befriend you, would do your people yet more harm. What can I do for you, Aileen?"

"You can pray for me and mine, young gentleman," responded Aileen, "as I will pray for you and yours—pray Heaven that better crops may bless the land, and that landlords' hearts may grow more pitiful."

"I shall not pray Heaven for the softening of landlords' hearts, depend on that, avert Aileen," said the young man, with a light laugh. "I think some more practical and worldly means of doing that must be found, for the love of greed is ingrained in all these folks. I fear that they will need strong arguments to make them relent, yet not such arguments as your friend, Mr. Thomas Maguire, would have used. Those are the forcible for the peace of any country. I saw his hand upon his revolver all the time. If my father or my brother were to leave the castle after nightfall they would be shot through the head like rabbits. This is a fearful state of things, Aileen. I shall have to give them some warning up at the castle. Tell me how I am to do it without compromising your friend."

"Arrah sure and you'll know how to do that same, Mr. Edward, better than I can tell you," Aileen answered, quickly. "You must not 'let on' that you know of such a farm as Kilallen. Mind, you have never been there in your life, and know nothing of the people. As for that savage Patrick—the saints forgive me if I speak wrong!—it's glad I'd be to see him locked up for a time. He is so bloodthirsty that if they don't he will kill someone before many weeks are over."

"I will take the hint," said Athlone. "Certainly Mr. Patrick seems to have set his heart upon executing punishment on some of us Athlones; but, Aileen, I owe you my life. What can I do for you? Tell me, and I will do it. I heard Mrs. Darrell say you were her adopted daughter, and that her son Dermot was breaking his heart over you. Tell me, then, do you love Dermot, and wish to marry him? If so, I will provide for him in some way; not give him a farm in this bleak old country, but something in England, where the land is richer, and the sun shines oftener, and the rain falls less frequently than in this bare mountain land. You shall never want, Aileen, neither you nor your husband, as long as Edward Athlone lives."

How was it that a sharp and cruel pang shot through the girl's heart at these words of the earl's son. She despised herself for it, but the fact remained the same. It was terrible to her to think that this Mr. Edward Athlone was so far above her that he could never regard her as higher than the scullery girl she had mentioned a short time back.

It was terrible to her to think that he would look on calm and smiling and see her married to Dermot Darrell, and perhaps give them a cow and half a dozen pigs as a wedding present. And yet—good heavens!—what was this daintily

reared young gentleman, almost a nobleman, to her?

"Sir," she said, coldly, "I do not love Dermot Darrell save as a brother. I would rather die than become his wife."

Athlone felt his heart leap as the girl spoke these words. Surely there is an electric communication between some human hearts? In a moment he saw that a very few more interviews would make him dangerously dear to this lonely peasant Aileen, who went to the market at Clondell and carried home the week's groceries and the shoes of "the boys" in a rough basket over her shoulders.

"So that I must see her as seldom as possible, poor little darling," said Edward, to himself.

Aloud he said, in his soft, deep, pleasant voice:

"Poor Dermot! I am sorry for him. Would you like to leave Ireland, Aileen, and take some situation in London? Would you like to go to school and learn?"

"I should like to learn to paint," said Aileen.

"Ah! have you talent? By George! I said I could read genius in your eyes. Oh, I will teach you to paint. You must come to London and—learn. I may be married soon, and you may even live in my house if you would like. Will you?"

To Aileen, pure and innocent as a babe, this proposal seemed delightful. It is very difficult to analyse the subtle distinctions of human feeling. Poor Aileen felt outraged at the idea of Mr. Edward Athlone gently handing her over to Dermot Darrell as his wife, but the idea of his marrying some ideal, high-born beauty worthy of him, and Aileen living with them both and devoting herself to them to learn to paint, seemed like an earthly paradise.

"How happy that would make me, Mr. Athlone," she said, with a sigh. "But I must not leave my mother as long as she wants me. Please Heaven I may see you again some day: and now, sir, I'll say good-night."

"No! no! no! You must—you shall come to the castle," said Edward Athlone. "There is no need for me to let them know up there that I have worn this ridiculous disguise. You must come and have some wine. How cold your little hands are."

"Arrah, I'll warm myself by walking home fast over the snow."

"Look," said Edward: "the moon has hidden her face. It is beginning to snow again quite fast. In the dark and the snow you would lose your way on that common. You shall not go unless in a carriage. I will not give you up to death. No, I would rather go back with you again, Aileen, and let your friend Patrick shoot me through the head. The snowstorms in these mountains are so sudden, so violent, and so bewildering. The streams are swollen. You might walk into one and be carried away and drowned."

Aileen felt the snow and the darkness increasing. Snow had a peculiarly blinding and bewildering effect upon her. She felt that she could hardly find her way safely down the avenue in that giddy, white whirling storm. So she allowed the earl's son to link her slender arm within his strong one and lead her towards the house.

He took off his disguise, rolled it up, and carried it under his arm, and thus they approached the terrace steps which led up to the entrance door of the castle. Soon they stood under the porch, and Athlone pulled the great bell. Another moment and the great door fell back, and a fairy scene of enchantment was revealed to the dazzled eyes of Aileen.

The hall of Athlone Castle was grand and large, paved with Italian marble of various shades, and before the fireplace, with its high carved mantelshelf of exquisite white marble, was spread a Persian carpet of the richest texture and brightest hues; soft couches and chairs, upholstered in crimson, were arranged about the fireplace, where a glorious fire was roaring up the wide chimney.

The walls were all hung with crimson cloth; here and there they were left free of upholstered, and were panelled. In each panel was painted

the full length portrait of some lord or lady, ancestor of the Athlones. The pillars in the hall were of richly-carven oak; round each were twined Christmas boughs of holly and laurel and ivy, interspersed with hot-house flowers. The whole was lighted up brilliantly by two crystal chandeliers blazing with a beautiful subdued luminance.

Aileen had never in her life seen any room handsomer than the best parlour of Father Byrne the priest. The Kidderminster carpet, black horse-hair chairs, walls papered with a pattern of roses on a white ground, and scarlet moreen curtains always seemed to her to represent the fine taste that distinguishes fashionable life. Now, she seemed to be all at once admitted into a fairy palace.

She stood and looked in a species of wonderment that was delightfully amusing to Edward Athlone. Just now when speaking to the blood-thirsty Patrick, Aileen had been really daring and fearless, and Athlone, afraid of his polished accent, had been silent and awkward in his absurd disguise, but now it was Aileen who was nervous and timid.

It was young Athlone who was gay and at his ease, for he had been cradled in the purples of rank and luxury and splendour, and Athlone Castle was one of the homes of his childhood. Thus, with a gay laugh, he sprang towards the glorious glowing fire, leading Aileen by the hand.

"Came along, Aileen, warm your poor little feet and don't look so dreadfully frightened, child, as if you were naughty, instead of being the very best little thing in creation. Sit down. Your dress won't hurt the red chair. There's nothing here that will spoil. Take off your hood and your cloak and your boots, and Martin will give you a pair of slippers, and bring her some wine. Martin and some nice tongue sandwiches, such as old Graney was famous for when I was a boy. Graney is here, I know."

Martin was a tall, grave footman, in plush and powder. He always travelled about everywhere with the earl and the countess. He had not expected that the honourable Edward would have made his appearance at the castle that Christmas, because he, Martin, knew well that he had not been invited, but he was, nevertheless, pleased to see him, for Edward was a vast favourite with all the servants.

Martin was quite well aware that the countess would be delighted to see her youngest son. True, Edward was often in scrapes, and was not loved by his father; neither was he exactly the favourite of his mother—that is to say, Lady Clondell was an affectionate mother to both her sons, and was a very good woman possessing a kind heart but a rather weak head.

She was beautiful and prejudiced, and believed implicitly every word that her noble lord spoke. The said noble earl, her husband, had, so Edward averred, been in the habit of humbugging her ever since Edward could remember. Nevertheless, she believed in him implicitly, and with regard to Edward, although she certainly loved him very tenderly, her love for him was

As moonlight unto sunlight;  
Or as water unto wine,

compared with the love she gave to her eldest son, Richard, Lord Athlone.

At the same time, Edward was perfectly certain of the warmest of welcomes from the gentle countess, and Martin hastened away to do the bidding of his young master, and to tell Lady Clondell of the arrival of her youngest son.

"Sit close to the fire, Aileen, and don't be in the least afraid."

Edward Athlone spoke in that sweet, deep voice of his, which was already like divine melody in the little white ears of pretty Aileen.

"Why, child, you are trembling like a little bird, and just now in real danger, how bold and bright you were."

"But, sir, I am out of place here. Ah, sir, the countess is—is coming; where may I hide, Mr. Athlone?"

"Keep your seat, child. My mother is the very woman to make a pet of you."

There came running across the wide hall a beautiful lady who looked too young to be the mother of grown sons. The Countess of Clondell was slight and graceful, with lovely brunette colouring. Her cheeks were pink and downy as autumn peaches; her eyes were dark as night; her black hair was worn in a large knot, low down at the back of her head. She was attired in an exquisite robe of dark crimson velvet. A high ruffle of white lace stood up round her throat, and she wore a collar of diamonds.

"Oh, my darling child," cried the countess, and she flung her arms round her son and clasped him to her breast. "My darling, and who is that sweet little thing in a peasant's dress. Oh, what lovely eyes. Why, is she afraid? Who is she, Ted?"

"She is a good little girl, mother, who guided me across the common and lent me an old cloak of her mother's to hide me; for there are some mad people about with revolvers, and from all I heard I thought I was in danger of being shot like a rabbit."

"What terrible people these Irish are," said the countess, "and yet they have such sweet manners. Do you know I feel that I could love them, Edward, if I had to live among them long."

"I believe they would love you, pretty mother," said Edward, looking fondly at the countess. "This child has saved my life, and I want you to be kind to her."

"What can I do for you, pretty one?" asked the sweet-mannered Countess of Clondell, with a honied smile.

"Och, thin, sure your ladyship if you would send me safe home to Kilkist."

"But she wants food first," cried Athlone— "food and wine. I must have her taken care of, mother, and a young fellow like I am is not the proper person to take care of a pretty girl like that."

"What a model she would make," said the countess; "and in a London salon in private theatricals dressed as the Colleen Bawn she would look divine."

"She is a good child," said Edward, gravely. "But here comes the wine and the sandwiches. Set them on the table, Martin, give Aileen her slippers, and now, mother, let us leave her to make a good meal; the child is famished."

## CHAPTER VI.

### AILEEN AT THE CASTLE.

Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd,  
Fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin, new scraped,  
Show'd like a stubble land at harvest home.  
He was perfumed like a milliner.

HORSEFUR.

THE countess went away with her son. Aileen sat in the warmth and glow of the fire, and she looked at the receding forms of the handsome young aristocrat and his beautiful lady mother with a strange, absurd feeling of loneliness, of being left "out," which surely of right could have had no reason for existence in her romantic heart.

What was this guy, handsome son of the nobles to her, Aileen Moore, the poor orphan pensioner of the Darrells, the Darrells themselves being among the poorest of the poor farmers of Irish soil? She had never sat in more than one carpeted room in all her life, and that room was the parlour of Father Byrne at Clondell.

What right had she, when she saw the countess in her sweeping robes of velvet, with jewels gleaming at her throat, leaning on the arm of her stalwart son, the echoes of their pleasant voices and merry laughter floating like music to her ears where she sat—what right had she to wish that she was with them? And when a great door opened in the distance and she saw a blaze of light and heard the sound of a harp and a lady's voice raised in song, why did she feel when the door was shut and Athlone was out of sight like one in whose face some stern angel had just closed the gates of Paradise?

But so it was. The powdered footman came

and placed before her the delicate, delicious sandwiches and the ruby wine, but her heart felt so wild and hungry that mere bodily hunger seemed to have no claim upon her, but after a while she tasted a sandwich and found it so good that she went on and made a hearty meal, for the poor child had not tasted food since the morning. She had been far too much excited and alarmed to partake of any bread and butter during the tea at Kilallen.

She drank a glass of wine which the footman poured out for her, and then she felt that she ought to be getting home. But how? While she was revolving this in her mind a door at the left side of the hall opened. She looked up, startled and saw a tall, graceful young man walking towards her with a supercilious air, half contemptuous, half patronising. As he came within the full blaze of the lights round the fireplace Aileen felt instinctively that he was Lord Athlone, heir to the earldom and brother to the Honourable Edward Athlone. He stared at her in a strange, inquisitive, yet most admiring fashion. He stopped short, and then said, "By George!" in a tone that annoyed Aileen terribly.

She sprang to her feet and looked straight at Lord Athlone in a startled, timid, yet half-defiant fashion that he thought was the prettiest, most graceful attitude he had ever seen of the stage. He stopped short.

"Who on earth are you? Where do you come from? What is your name?"

"Aileen Moore, my lord."

"And how do you know my name?"

"Arrah, only by guess, my lord. Maybe you are not Lord Athlone at all."

"Oh, yes, but I am," he said. "Sit down."

As he spoke he drew one of the crimson-seated chairs close to the fire and sat down, but Aileen remained standing.

"Are you afraid, my darling?" asked Lord Athlone, with a smile. "You won't be in the least afraid of me when you know me a little better. I am not disliked by your enchanting sex, Miss Aileen Moore. Tell me, has my father the honour to be the landlord of your father?"

"No, my lord, I have no father."

"And where do you live?"

"At Kilkist, with some friends," Aileen answered, looking down.

"Ah, well, I won't bother you about them. You are the prettiest girl I have ever seen in Ireland—or out of it," Lord Athlone added, after a pause.

Lord Athlone stared very boldly at Aileen. She felt that she would have given the world to run away, but she knew not where to go in all that grand castle, filled with utter strangers. Edward Athlone appeared to have forgotten her. She looked with a piteous yearning gaze along the hall, and towards that portion of it where he had disappeared, and she grasped the carved back of one of the chairs and then glanced in alarm at Lord Athlone.

Richard Athlone was very unlike his younger brother. He was handsome, but his beauty was entirely of the earth, earthy. He was fair, with dark eyes and blonde moustache, and long Dundreary whiskers. He was tall and strongly built, and very foppish in his dress. He wore a blazing diamond jewel at his throat, and both his white slender hands sparkled with diamonds.

His whole presence was pervaded with a pleasant perfume. His clothes and hair were redolent of it. His skin was white and fine as any lady's. His hair was of a light, bright chestnut; his eyes were, however, as dark as his brother's, black, flashing with a certain restless mockery that to Aileen was irritating.

"The saints forgive me," she said to herself, "but I hate Lord Athlone."

"You have told me nothing about yourself, pretty Aileen," said Lord Athlone. "Do tell me what business brought you to Athlone Castle?"

"I shall be going just directly, my lord," stammered Aileen.

"Oh, but that's no answer at all," said Lord Athlone. "I did not ask when you were going, but what brought you here?"

Instinct told Aileen that Lord Athlone, for all

his soft voice and effeminate looks, was a cruel foe to the poor. She divined by some subtle intuition that he hated the peasantry of the soil to which his family owed their title and much of their land. She hesitated a moment, and then something like a spirit of defiance awoke within her.

"My lord," she said, "some of you gentry have made yourselves feared and—yes—and hated in this land, and our people are very fierce when they are roused. Your brother, Mr. Athlone, was coming home alone, and I feared for him, wrongly or rightly I can't tell, and I offered to walk home with him. He put on a disguise of an old cloak and hat like a market woman, and so he managed to arrive at home with safety. I was with him, and if anybody had spoken to us I could have answered in the accent of these parts, which you of the gentry can't."

"Good. Then you are a sweetheart of Ted's. Will you exchange him for me? He is a poor devil. I have lots of money. Can get lots. Would you like that ring? It's worth twenty pounds."

As he spoke, he took a diamond ring from his finger and held it towards Aileen.

"My lord, a gift like that would burn a hole in my finger," said Aileen.

Lord Athlone had the coolest manners in the world. Immediately he put the ring on his finger again, and said with a smile:

"It is worth too much for me to part with it. It is an heirloom. I must give you something else."

"No, my lord. You must give me nothing. Please don't talk to me like that."

And then she stopped short with a strange blundering feeling that she had said too much, and shown too much earnestness. The excessive coolness of Lord Athlone provoked her almost to fury. He seemed to regard her as a being of another creation, not as a fellow creature, or something no better, perhaps, indeed hardly so aristocratic as the large white hound which now crossed the wide hall and crouched at his feet.

"I must talk to you in the way that pleases me, pretty Aileen. I can't talk to order. So your friends and relations want to shoot some of us, do they? Well, we must put them in prison, and when we have hanged a few of them, perhaps it will be better for the rest of us."

"My lord, our people are down-trodden and oppressed. You and yours have driven them mad."

"Well, my dear Aileen, depend upon it we intend to oppress them and tread them down a little more before we have done with them. As for driving them mad, I always look on your male relatives—all the Irishmen that is to say—as being half mad at all times. It is perhaps just as well they should become quite so, then we can hang off a few scores of them comfortably. What brought Mr. Edward Athlone to you? How did you make his acquaintance?"

"I don't consider that I have made his acquaintance, my lord," said Aileen, quickly.

"All right. How did he make yours, then?"

"I have answered as many questions, my lord, as I mean to answer," Aileen replied.

Lord Athlone pulled his Dundreary whiskers, looked at Aileen, and vowed to himself that she was lovelier every time he looked at her. Lord Athlone was one of the most selfishly reckless and dissipated noblemen in the world. He was heir to a fine fortune and old title; he was handsome, graceful and clever in his way, and half Belgravian had bowed down to him the last season. As for girls in the rank of Aileen, whether it was true or not, he was accustomed to boast that they ran after him wherever he appeared, thus the evident dislike of Aileen he chose to read quite backwards and contrary.

"She is a clever little demon," he said to himself, "but I will have her over in London before May, living in St. John's Wood and driving a pair of ponies and wearing a crimson velvet costume and rubies in her ears. She must be attired in red; it will accord so well with her ebony hair and ivory colouring and exquisite contour. By George! though, the little witch could not look much better than she does

in that peasant's dress of hers. And I wonder where Ted is?" said Lord Athlone.

Then he began to sing a song, a love song, in French at the pitch of his sweet baritone voice. Aileen, not comprehending a word, still felt that the young lord was mocking her. She looked about helplessly for some of the servants, but not one of them appeared.

Lord Athlone was as cruel and as handsome as a tiger cat. He thoroughly enjoyed the fear and perplexity of Aileen. He was so vain, and had so little belief in the innate purity of the hearts of womankind, that he never for one moment anticipated that the pretty peasant girl would not yield in time to his wishes, and consent to occupy the bijou villa in the wood of St. John, where already so many fair and frail damsels had enjoyed a brief reign until discarded by this faithless, fickle Lothario.

All at once, without saying another word, Lord Athlone turned on his heel and walked out of the hall. Aileen felt that she would like to make her escape.

"If it is only not snowing," she said to herself, "I will find my way across the common to Kilkist."

Just at that moment a door opened and there came towards her a dwarfish man, with an excessively large head and very protruding eyes. He was dressed as a gentleman. There was something very revolting in the expression of his pale, broad face, with its large loose lips and heavy jaw. This man seemed about forty years of age. He came up to Aileen and said, politely :

"The countess wishes to see you. Will you follow me?"

"Yes, sir," said Aileen, "only I am so anxious to get home. Is it snowing, sir?"

"Fast," replied the dwarfish gentleman—"very fast, indeed. I think it will be impossible to get you home to-night."

"Oh, but, indeed, I must go," said poor Aileen.

"The question is how can a carriage be driven over that pathless common. You live, I have understood, at Kilkist, do you not?"

"Yes," said Aileen.

The dwarfish gentleman now led the way up a rather narrow flight of richly carpetted stairs. Nothing doubting, Aileen followed, and then found herself in a narrow and very dimly lighted corridor. There were smooth walls on each side, no doors, only at the very end burnt a dim oil lamp.

On went the dwarfish gentleman swiftly; poor Aileen followed. All at once the man passed into a doorway, shut the door with a loud bang, and Aileen was left standing in the passage.

At that moment the dim light at the end was put out and the girl found herself in complete darkness. On either side bare, smooth walls, but not so, it seemed to her, a human soul within call. She was hemmed in by a deathly silence and total darkness.

(To be Continued.)

#### TIGHT BOOTS.

I HAD on tight boots. They were number seven when I started, but they are no more than five now, and still diminishing. I walked two hours in those shoes after that before we reached home. Doubtless I could have the reader's sympathy for the asking. Many people have never had the headache or the toothache, and I am one of them myself, but everybody has worn tight shoes for two or three hours, and known the luxury of taking them off in a retired place and seeing his feet swell up and obscure the firmament. Few of us will forget the exquisite hour we were married.

Once, when I was a callow, bashful cub, I took a plain, unsentimental country girl to a comedy one night. I had known her a day, and she seemed divine. I wore my new boots. At the end of the first hour she asked :

"Why do you fidget so with your feet, sir?"

"Did I?" I answered.

Then I put my attention there and kept still.

At the end of another half hour she said :

"Why do you say 'yes, oh, yes,' and 'no, certainly, very true,' to everything I say, when half the time they are entirely irrelevant questions?"

I blushed and explained that I had been a little absent-minded. At the end of another half hour she said :

"Please, why do you grin so steadfastly at vacancy and yet look so sad?"

I explained that I always did when I was reflecting. An hour passed, and then she turned and contemplated me with an earnest eye, and said :

"Why do you cry all the time?"

I explained that very funny comedies always made me cry. At last human nature surrendered, and I secretly slipped off my boots; but that was a mistake. I was not able to get them on any more. It was a rainy night, there were no omnibuses going our way, and as I walked home burning with shame, with the girl on one arm and my boots under the other, I was an object of some compassion, especially in those moments of martyrdom when I had to pass through the glare that fell upon the pavement from the street lamps. Finally this innocent child of the forest said :

"Where are your boots?"

And being unprepared I put a fitting finish to the follies of the evening with the stupid remark :

"The higher classes do not wear them to the theatre."—R. H.

#### BY THE SEA.

My blue-eyed pet with golden hair,  
Is sitting on my knee,  
And gazes eagerly afar,  
Across the beach, beyond the bar,  
Where rolls the restless sea.

She puts her little hand in mine,  
And laughs with childish glee,  
To see the foaming billows splash,  
As on the shore they fiercely dash,  
Then glide back silently.

But while she laughs so merrily,  
My heart is far away,  
And, as I look upon the shore,  
Where loud and long the breakers roar,  
My sad soul seems to say :—

"The sea is like a human life  
It breaks upon the shore,  
Of time, with a restless might,  
And when the goal is just in sight,  
Dies—to return no more.

"And all along the shore of time  
Full many a wreck doth lie!  
The pangs of many a mad carouse,  
Of blasted hopes and broken vows,  
Of happy days gone by."

Yet while I muse in mournful mood,  
And gaze upon the sea,  
My blue-eyed pet with golden hair,  
Whose heart has never known a care,  
Still sits upon my knee.

Her head is resting on my breast—  
Her eyes in slumber deep:  
The same rough sea whose breakers roar;  
And madly, fiercely lash the shore,  
Has lulled my child to sleep.

T. B. C.

MISS JENNY ARMSTRONG, of Ogdensburg, gives whistling entertainments. It is said she whistles like a canary. Who for?

#### WHAT SHALL WE DRINK?

INORDINATE tea drinking must inevitably produce nervous and mental disease. Most men and women use tea in moderation, but great numbers use it immoderately; and in proportion to their excess they must suffer. Loss of appetite, incapacity to digest wholesome food, sleeplessness, irritability, and all the well known features of a broken down nervous system are depicted as the general consequences of the prostration that follows regularly upon the stimulant effects of tea, and in this respect coffee is classed with it. People who are attentive to the various arguments presented by doctors and others as to the effects of their beverages will presently be troubled to know what they may take.

Alcoholic drinks of all kinds are frightfully injurious; and here is an indictment against the paralysing cup that cheers but not inebriates. Neither wine nor beer, nor tea nor coffee, and of course no whiskey then. Will you take milk? All the typhoid fever, half the diphtheria and two-thirds of the consumption, say yet other doctors, come to us in that mild fluid. Will you take water? Dyspepsia, say all the doctors together, marks the water drinker for her own. What will you take? In other words, by what means will you poison yourself?—R. H.

#### IN THE KITCHEN.

Most maladies begin with the stomach, therefore are they directly traceable to the kitchen. The good cook's standard of excellence is a pleased palate; nature's standard is an untroubled digestion; and nature gets the worst of the controversy. Even good cooks enrage the stomach; what then, is to be said of the bad ones—the servants who are expected to prepare three meals a day, though they never had any instruction in the culinary art? Further, what do the men and women who order dinners know of things fit to eat? It is not only a possibility, but a lamentably frequent occurrence, that a meal of which the essentials are good in themselves is ruined for practical purposes by combination of dishes that can never agree upon transformation into blood, bone and muscle. The condiments, seasoning, etc., which are supposed to make dishes palatable, torment many a good liver to the very verge of worthlessness; while hard meats whose only virtue is in their flavour, fish smothered in irritating sauces, and rich and thoroughly indigestible desserts, are stupefying the brains of numerous men worthy of at least nobler means of self-destruction. Physicians are needed in the kitchen as well as in the bed-chamber.

MR. GOLDNEY, M.P., at a recent meeting of a Labourers' Friendly Society at Chippenham, recommended dandelions as "a most valuable article of diet." This is an improvement upon a noble duke's suggestion of curry powder and water.

SHE hung upon his arm so lovingly—he was her heaven—and beamed up in his face with all the radiance of those pale blue eyes. Her heart would speak, and yet the tongue refused its utterance. But love and admiration broke the spell, and from the rapture of her soul she breathed forth, "Your moustache is beginning to grow, Georgie."

THE Queen has selected Inspector Charles Fraser to attend specially upon her Majesty and to travel in the Royal suite. Apartments are being fitted up in the Norman Tower, Windsor Castle, for the reception of Mr. Fraser and his family. The appointment is comparatively a new one, and there has been but one other instance of such a selection. The attempts which have been made on the lives of foreign potentates are said to have actuated her Majesty in making the appointment.



[THE DEPARTURE.]

## TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &amp;c., &amp;c.

### CHAPTER XVI.

Even now, though youth its bloom has shed,  
No lights of age adorn thee;  
The few who loved thee once have fled,  
And they who scath scorn thee.

THE hours passed slowly away for the young fugitive ere the promised warning came. All was in readiness for her departure; her trunks packed; her travelling dress waiting to be assumed at a moment's notice, and Leila herself was pacing the room in irregular and agitated expectation. It was as it were a race against time, and she scarcely knew what she wished should gain the victory.

Geoffrey Sabine would most probably come to watch over the interests of his client. If he came ere her departure, it would be almost a necessity for her to see him. That would change all—all her plans and ideas, and perhaps the consequences of that singular and suspicious intrigue. For it was in Leila's imagining an intrigue, but where there is inexperience and prejudice such as the actors in the drama had inspired, there might be mistake and injustice in her impressions.

She listened to every sound during those weary hours, but it was not till breakfast had been despatched and morn was approaching that she distinguished the sharp approach of horses' feet and carriage wheels. Could it be Mr. Sabine? Would she be saved from what she dreaded and disliked even now—that exile to strangers from her own native land.

There was a step rapidly approaching her door. Her heart beat high. Was it to announce the arrival of the family lawyer and demand her presence. She was well nigh giddy with the agitated hope that would change so much in her destiny. She could scarcely summon courage and sense to even distinguish the words uttered by the domestic who opened the door of her room.

"Please, miss, all is ready; the cab is at the door, and the porter will take down your boxes," rang like a knell on her ears.

But it was of no avail to hesitate when she had so resolutely promised and planned.

"Very well, I am ready," she said, as if signing her death warrant.

She descended the stairs to the wide hall of the hotel. There were one or two loungers there who idly and unconsciously watched the process of departure, but no word was spoken on any hand.

Mat Somers was in readiness to conduct his fair young charge to the carriage waiting for her, but in spite of himself there was a sort of deference in his manner, as if acting more as a courier than an escort. The trunks were placed on the roof of the cab, and the passengers entered it. Leila gazed even then in half-unconscious despair for the last moment ere the door was shut and the signal given for driving off.

"All right" was spoken, and the whip cracked and Leila started on her journey from her native land. It was some hours or so afterwards when another and very different conveyance drove up to the door of the hotel. It had four horses and a postillion, though nothing betokened any positive rank and wealth in the traveller, and to the experienced eyes of the servants the equipage denoted haste rather than habitual display or ostentation. The traveller, who was in truth Geoffrey Sabine, sprang from the carriage and hastily entered the house.

"Is Miss Lorraine here? Can I see her?" he said, with agitated eagerness.

"Well, no, sir. She's just gone away—at least, about an hour ago," was the reply.

"Good heavens, how unlucky! I was detained on the road," he exclaimed, as if the information could at all interest the domestics. "Where is she gone?"

"I can't exactly say, sir, but I fancy she's gone abroad from what I heard," said the porter. "But I expect the gentleman who came yesterday can tell you better than I can, as he and the lady seemed to know all about her, and it was with one of them that she went away."

"What name?" asked Geoffrey, eagerly, half trembling lest he should hear the name of Lord Dunallan as a seal to his fears for Leila's safety and honour.

"Lewis, sir. He came about the poor foreign lady who was killed in the accident. Would you like to see him, sir?" asked the porter.

"Certainly I would, and at once!" exclaimed Geoffrey, quickly. "And then get some luncheon ready, my good fellow, I've hardly tasted food to-day."

In a few seconds the two lawyers were face to face—men of the same profession, but how different. The one so cunning and so sinister in appearance, the other open, determined, keen in his every look and tone and gesture.

"I need scarcely introduce myself to you, Mr. Lewis," said Geoffrey, as he took a chair nearly opposite to his host. "I am the representative of the solicitors of the Comtesse de Cencl, and what is my errand is to ascertain the truth of the strange reports that have reached me about her proceedings before the accident."

"They will very soon be explained to you, sir, though I decline at present to do more than enter on the bare facts of the case," said Lewis, coldly. "The comtesse discovered and recognised her nephew and made him her heir. I am executor to the will, and of course all her affairs will pass through my hands, and you will have due notice to deliver up to me all the papers and documents you may have that belong to her as her legal representative."

For the moment Geoffrey Sabine was fairly daunted by the assurance of the demand and the cool assumption of interests of such magnitude.

"I shall know how to meet such a demand when it is legally made," he said, "and probably you may not find it quite so easily arranged with men of the world and professional men as with weak and ailing women."

Mr. Lewis flushed up indignantly.

"Do you mean to insinuate—" he began.

"I mean to intimate nothing," interrupted Geoffrey. "It will be by actions, not words, that our opinions and course will be guided. But what I want to know at this moment more especially is where Miss Lorraine is to be found?"

"Which I neither can nor will inform you," said the man angrily.

"Do you decline giving access to an important witness in the matter as a companion of Madame de Cenci at the time of her death?" returned Geoffrey, firmly. "It is at any rate a significant proof of your ideas as to her evidence in the case, but it will be easy to trace her," he went on, rising hastily.

"Scarcely so easy or so desirable for the young woman," sneered Mr. Lewis; "you can perhaps better estimate this when I tell you that in my grace and mercy, at the intercession of the lady who brought up Madame de Cenci's heir, she is now flying from a criminal charge of felony."

Geoffrey laughed incredulously.

"That tale will not answer, Mr. Lewis. You might as well tell me that Miss Lorraine had been found guilty of upsetting the train which killed the comtesse."

"Nevertheless, it is true as that the comtesse is dead," returned Mr. Lewis, calmly. "There are jewels of value missing from the dressing-case of the comtesse. Miss Lorraine had the key—and can give no account of them. In consequence both the coroner and jury consider it a very suspicious case, but we did not wish to press it if she got out of the way, so as to save us all trouble in the matter; she left the house this morning and will be over the sea in a few hours. That is all I have to say about her."

Geoffrey was simply dumbfounded. He would have staked his own honour, his life itself, on Leila's honour and purity. Even now he could not credit her guilt, and yet, why had she fled from the inquiry, and why had she not appealed to him to establish her innocence?

Was it possible? could that fair, refined girl have been guilty? and, if so, how sorely must she have been tempted. Such was the bewildered reflection of Geoffrey Sabine when he had recovered somewhat the astounding shock of such a revelation.

True, he had, in his brief though brilliant professional career, met with many phases of evil doing. It was not always the most hardened nor the most coarse sinners who were the most dangerous and the worst at heart, as he knew full well. The sorely tempted, the stray waifs of society, the lonely and the desolate ones, were hardly to be judged by the standard of those less tempted and less well trained.

It is for the All-seeing and the Merciful One to judge, and to return to every man the reward of his works for good or ill. Not as man seeth doth He give His judgment who readeth the heart. But then Geoffrey Sabine scarcely was capable at the moment of appreciating the truth that he yet should have known so well.

He did not pause to think of aught save that the only woman who had fully come up to his standard of what women should be was fallen among that despised crew with whom he had to deal, and his heart failed him at the terrible truth.

He craved for rest, for solitude to think over and act in the emergency which his duty to the poor deluded client and the lovely criminal required. As to these pretenders to wealth and rank, it was for the moment a matter of indifference to him whether their claims were true or false. The unfortunate and weak-natured comtesse was gone; it mattered little whether she was succeeded in her fortune or rank by a peer's son or a peasant's.

"Well, Mr. Sabine, what have you more to say," sounded gratingly on his ears in the midst of his reverie, "are you prepared to contest this matter? I warn you it will be in vain."

Geoffrey slowly roused himself from that deep abstraction.

"I should like to see the person who has kept that secret so carefully for all these years," he said; "that might make a great difference in my opinion of the matter. At present it bears the full impress of a swindle—to give the correct word for the proceeding."

Mr. Lewis flushed angrily, but he dared not as it seemed drive the young lawyer to desperate measures.

"Why should you see her, she is ill? and of course as one of the lower classes she is not so able to deal with such a tangled affair as myself," he said, deprecatingly; "in fact I am the entire manager of the business. It is all placed in my hands, and you as a professional man ought to know what that means," he added, with a significant nod.

"You will excuse my entering on those details, Mr. Lewis. It is enough for me that there is a better and more legitimate source of information for me to insist on availing myself of it. And I demand an interview with the person who gave Madame de Cenci this information, and who has brought up this claimant as her grandson. If that is refused I shall know how to force the matter, and it will tell damningly against your client."

Mr. Lewis thought for a moment or two. It might be that there was a war in his mind between the etiquette of his profession and the common sense of what Geoffrey Sabine urged.

"I will inquire," he said. "I will inquire what Mrs. Somers chooses to do. She is a free agent so far as my advice might prevail with her, and I do not mind assuring you that I will not in this instance advise her against her will."

Perhaps the very compliance was an evil augury for the young lawyer, but he did not trouble himself to weigh these contingencies. His duty was plain as the legal adviser of the deceased comtesse, and yet more powerful was the wish to ascertain some more full and satisfactory news of Leila than the dry lawyer would be likely to yield.

"I will wait till you return. I understand she is near," he returned, coldly. "My time is scarcely my own in this instance longer than is absolutely necessary for the business."

The lawyer disappeared, and in a few minutes returned with granted consent to the interview.

"Mrs. Somers cannot endure anxiety or fatigue," he said, "so you will be good enough to make your visit a short one. There is very little to hear after all—most has been already stated. Then when you have asked what further is to satisfy you I make it a condition that you should give up her and your client for ever when you have heard all."

"For ever" was the last promise that Geoffrey was inclined to make.

"My, or rather Mr. Vansandam's, client is gone to a world where we should be very superfluous, Mr. Lewis," he said; "but I frankly tell you that neither my employer or myself have the least desire to prop up a fallen cause or deny justice. Now on this understanding be so good as to lose no time in taking me to Mrs. Somers."

There was a brief delay, and then the lawyer came back and requested him to follow him to the next room, where the bedridden woman lay. Mrs. Somers received him more cordially than he expected. There was indeed no trace in her air and manner of the stiff, suspicious reluctance threatened by her lawyer, and Geoffrey was favourably impressed by her manner.

"You are come to try and find any fraud in this matter," she said, frankly, "and I am not altogether surprised. It seemed strange and sudden, but it was not so to me, who had waited for it so long and so patiently."

"But why was that, why did you delay the claim, Mrs. Somers?"

"For very good reasons. In the first place it was a very terrible thing to advance the lad's claims to distant and unwilling ears, and I was

too ill and infirm to take the proper steps to press them, and in the next there were certain proofs that I could not altogether complete till the last few months, and which have left no doubt on the case of my supposed grandson. And, besides, to confess a weakness, I really loved the boy, and scarcely liked to part with him even for rank and wealth."

It was difficult to doubt the woman's frank statement, made as it was with a calm dignity that in itself commanded respect, and which all felt more or less who came within the influence of that remarkable woman.

"But that does not explain the charge you have made against Miss Lorraine," said Geoffrey, doubtfully. "To tell you the truth, Mrs. Somers, that circumstance throws an air of suspicion over the whole affair. No one can have known so much as she did as to the last wishes and intentions of the comtesse, and as to the idea of the theft it is simply preposterous."

Mrs. Somers gave a grave, calm smile.

"That is like youth," she said, "to suppose that the young and lovely cannot do wrong. Why, boy, for you are but a boy to my ideas, it is among them that the greatest follies—ay, and sins are committed. And in this case there was some excuse. Leila Lorraine was an orphan, a foundling, alone and destitute. Madame de Cenci's death deprived her of home and shelter. There was no direct heir. She could hardly refuse if she was tempted to the sin."

Mr. Sabine flushed indignantly.

"Woman, that is a wicked, base idea," he said, angrily. "Why I have been a stray waif on the world since my early years, and I would as soon cut off my hand as commit any unworthy deed. And I am sure that Leila Lorraine would have been equally incapable of wrong."

"Because she was young and lovely," said Mrs. Somers, with a half sneer. "Very powerful argument with a young man, but scarcely so where the law and its officials are concerned. So it was far better that she should be placed out of their power. And so you too were thrown on your own resources," she added, after a pause, during which she had keenly scanned his features. "As an orphan, I suppose, but that is scarcely the same as a foundling who knows nothing of her parentage."

"And is that the case with that poor girl?" he asked, with keen interest.

"Yes. What of that? It usually implies sin and shame in the parents when that is the case, and it is best when it is forgotten and unknown to the child of those belonging to it."

Geoffrey's eyes betokened an eager interest very unlike Mrs. Somers' advice.

"I do not consider that in my own case," he said, proudly. "I never knew my father nor anything belonging to him, but I had enough confidence in my mother to believe her word as to the past. And thanks to her training and care, I was enabled to take the place of a gentleman and an honourable man in the world, and that is enough in my opinion as a motive to exertion and high principle."

"Yes, in a man, but scarcely in a woman, and one who is without a single friend, who is a nameless one," said Mrs. Somers, calmly. "So you do not know anything of your relatives, Mr. Sabine?"

"Nothing."

"Your mother had no intercourse with them?" the woman asked once more.

"Not that I know of; but why do you ask, my good woman?" he said, impressed by that peculiar manner that was so commanding and so devoid of any tinge of impatience or curiosity in its tone.

"Oh, I scarcely know. Remember that I have been brought into contact with so many families, heard so many strange histories, that it is possible I might have met with your mother, or someone belonging to her, in my lifetime, if I knew where she lived or anything that belonged to her."

The idea was a wild one, as it seemed to the young man, and rather gave him the impression that the good woman was vengeful on her dote. But there was no actual cause for refusing what she asked, and he replied, quizzily:

"I was born in the West Indies, my good lady, and my mother was a native there. We came over when I was very young, and my father's death took place, I understand, almost immediately. That will account for a great deal that seems singular perhaps in the story, and certainly makes it very unlikely that you can ever have come at all in contact with her."

"She was very dark then, I suppose?" said Mrs. Somers.

"Scarcely," replied Geoffrey. "My mother had been very lovely, and though her hair was intensely black, her skin was white and fair, not at all according to the usual idea of a Creole. Besides, her mother had been a blonde, as the picture she retained of her showed. No, if it were really true that her husband's relatives did in any way reject her," he added, proudly, "they were blind and obstinate, for a sweeter, fairer creature never existed."

"Have you a portrait of her as well as of her mother?" asked the woman.

"I have, but not here," he answered.

"Are you considered like her?" she inquired again.

"No, I am not half so good-looking," he said, with a smile. "I believe I am considered far more like my father."

"Probably—yes, no doubt," she musingly said.

"How can you tell?" he asked, with an incredulous smile.

She started from a passing reverie in which she had fallen.

"Oh, simply because it is a very natural alternative," she returned; "but perhaps some day you can let me see it. There is certainly a likeness in you to someone I know, though I cannot say who at this moment, and it makes me a little curious as to your strange story, that is all."

"But," said Geoffrey, returning to the real object of his visit from the digression into which he had been led, "all this does not affect the object of my interview with you. You cannot expect that I or my employer will accept this claimant put forward by you simply on the report that Madame de Cenci was satisfied about him. She was so ready to believe that anyone of the least resemblance to her nephew was the missing heir, and to accept all proofs about him, but we lawyers demand a great deal more than she did. I suspect, and in Miss Loraine's absence we have not even any direct evidence that she so accepted this youth."

"Surely her will was enough?" returned Mrs. Somers, sharply.

"Not quite, as there are such things as a will being induced by undue pressure," said Geoffrey, significantly.

"And you mean to insinuate that, young man?" said Mrs. Somers, with flashing eyes, which might have been the gleam of thirty years before in those still brilliant orbs.

"As a lawyer, I do," was the firm reply.

"And as a man?" she asked, with a strange anxiety.

"I might regret to think that one who, like you, are near another world, and so evidently superior to her station in sense and power, should be guilty of an infamous fraud," he returned, in an unflinching tone; "but still, if you ask me the plain and downright question, I am bound to tell you that circumstances are suspicious, and I more than question the legitimate genuineness of this pretended heir. May the Creator pardon you if you pass into His presence with such a falsehood and fraud on your conscience!"

Mrs. Somers did flush at the words.

"I will not answer you, young man," she said. "It were an insult to myself to deny your idle, baseless charges, and you yourself, as a lawyer, would be the first to tell me that I was not in the slightest degree to criminate myself, or give you a handle against me. I take my stand on the legal proofs, and that is all, so now I leave it in your hands to do your worst."

"And you refuse to give me any information as to Miss Loraine?" he inquired.

"Decidedly. For her own sake and all others I do," she replied, resolutely.

Geoffrey rose impatiently.

"Very well," he said. "It will not perhaps be so difficult as you imagine to find her out. As to the rest, Mrs. Somers, I give you due notice that the affair will be sifted to the very bottom. Should it be satisfactory it will materially assist you in prosecuting the further claims of the youth on his father's titles and estates. If not, it is but a fitting discovery of a gigantic fraud. Good-morning," and he left the room without further word or salutation to the old woman.

Mrs. Somers remained buried in deep thought for some moments.

"Foolish boy—foolish boy," she said. "He might learn what import he much to hear. I remember well that there was a scandal and a hushed-up rumour about one whom he resembles so much as to be taken some near relation; and, if so, I might have put him on a scent that he little suspects. Ah, me! ah, me! The day of my death must be drawing near, as he foretold, since all the shadows of the past seem thickening around me and rising up like ghosts about my bed. She, and he, too, both to bring the long buried sins of other days to recollection! But I will be firm and brave. Maria Somers, you have lived but for one object, and that object shall and must be fulfilled. Be it so. The sin shall be visited on my head in life and in death."

Again she leaned her head back and fell into deep meditation, until the entrance of Mr. Lewis recalled her once more to her usual calm, self-possessed manner.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

If thus the cold world now wither  
Each feeling that once was dear,  
Come, child of misfortune, come hither—  
I'll weep with thee for tear for tear.

LEILA's journey was over at length. She had endured as she best might the coarse if well-meant attentions of her escort, Mat Somers. Not one word had passed between them as to the past or the future. Leila had too great a repugnance to his vulgar style of manner and his cunning, sinister eyes to ask one word of questioning or remark on what he was perhaps ignorant of, and if he knew would certainly keep from her with zealous futility. Thus the short passage and the long railway journey passed on in comparative silence, save where it was absolutely necessary that some brief communication should pass between them. Still, Mat was not wanting in his blunt civility to his young charge, though, as she noted, he never lost sight of her even for a moment, so that had she been inclined to escape it would only have ended in a most disastrous recapture.

At last they arrived at fair Nice, that refuge of invalids and the more delicate sons and daughters of England, where the drooping forms and pale cheeks seem to revive and catch new bloom from the lovely flowers and the verdant green leaves of the winter vegetation, and the spirits rise with the light, fresh June air.

Mat Somers at once ordered a carriage to convey himself and his charge and her belongings to the house of Madame di Ballard, and, as might be expected, looked with deep interest on her future residence, and waited eagerly for the appearance of Madame di Ballard on the scene.

It was a pretty villa, overrun with graceful creepers, and with exquisite flowers and plants in the verandah round the house and in the porch by which it was entered. Indeed, there were evidences of good taste in the whole aspect of the dwelling that gave a cheering confidence to the young girl as to the character of her future benefactress, for such she most undoubtedly was doomed, for the present, at any rate, to consider her situation as affording her a shelter, or procuring her one from others by her recommendation.

The bell was rung, and in a very brief space the girl was ushered into a shaded sitting-room, where all was on the same *calibre* as the outer aspect of the villa. The furniture was simple but elegant in its light and airy form, and the pretty ornaments which adorned the walls and

tables and brackets gave it an air of far more pretension than the cost of the belongings warranted.

There was certainly some costly Sèvres china, and some miniatures and pictures of great beauty and some intrinsic value, and one or two bronzes and statuettes, which bore the stamp of Italian origin. Leila's eyes, accustomed as they had been to the exquisite and costly furniture and decorations of the Castle Loraine, could well appreciate these small but precious works of art. And the whole entourage gave her a favourable impression of the owner of the dwelling. She was more eager to have an introduction to her from the hopes thus conjured up.

In a short time, which appeared interminable to the young expectant, the door opened, and a tall and slight woman, whose figure was so youthful as to belie the years that must have passed over her head, entered the room. She was dressed in black silk that gave a still slighter appearance to her figure, and some real and costly lace ornamented the throat and wrists.

Her still abundant hair was partially concealed by a cap of the same material, and it was very difficult for Leila to reconcile the idea that the woman before her was either of the same age or the same rank of life as the grey-haired, infirm and somewhat gaunt figure of Mrs. Somers.

Madame di Ballard's features were of a far more womanly type than her friend's, though there was a decided air of decision, and of one who had known and battled with the world and had held her own in the combat. She advanced to Leila with a kind but restrained smile and gesture.

"I am glad to see you," she said. "Mrs. Somers has written me about you, and according to her account, you are much to be pitied if you are innocent, and to be blamed if, as I hope is not the case, you are guilty of the crime from which you are escaping justice."

It was a startling commencement, but on the whole Leila was rather glad that the ice should thus be broken, and that there should be a thoroughly clear understanding established at once between her and her new hostess. There was an ingenuous unflinchingness in her look as she met Madame di Ballard's keen gaze, and replied fairly:

"I am innocent, madame, or I should not have been here. Had I chosen to do wrong I could easily have escaped any danger."

"Indeed; then why did you wish to escape if you were sure of your innocence and could establish it?" was the rather incredulous question.

"Simply, because there were strong appearances against me," returned Leila, "and it would have been too late afterwards to have been able to prove I was not guilty. But Mrs. Somers would not have sent me to you, madame, if she had supposed I was a thief," she added, indignantly.

"Well, there is, perhaps, some truth in that idea, and I shall soon be able to judge of your real character," said Madame di Ballard, glancing around her. "I do not say that I doubt you, young lady, but, of course, at present your character is somewhat shaded by the unlucky occurrence. However, you must be tried, and we will not say anything more on the subject till you have had some rest and refreshment. You shall be shown to a chamber, and you can have a tray taken to you there, while I attend to your companion, who will return immediately, I understand, to Padstow."

She touched a bell, and a neat French bourette at once appeared and led the way up a few broad stairs to a small, pretty room, arranged with the same taste and foreign air that reigned over the other parts of the dwelling. The mahogany bedstead stood in a recess, so as to give the room almost the appearance of a sitting or dressing-room.

There was an antique carved oak washstand and a large mirror over it, and chévere and old-tapestry chairs to match, while the lace curtains and the snowy drapery and linen took from it any air of dreariness or gloom.

"Mademoiselle will like her mallets. She shall have them directly, and some eau chaude," said the pretty Marie, kindly; "she looks so tired and faint."

Leila was most thankful for the offer. She had slept a little since her departure from Plymouth, and the incessant constraint that had been put upon her by the presence of the rough, ungainly Mat had given her no opportunity for rest and calm thought during the journey, and now the agitation of her first introduction to her new hostess, and the startling abruptness of her greeting, had fevered her nerves and bewildered her brains so as to make absolute luxury for the moment.

Marie, with a Frenchwoman's tact and grace, managed to render all the requisite services to the weary young stranger without intrusively forcing them on her notice. A cup of hot coffee, a white roll and a small pat of butter was brought up on a little tray, the mallet uncorded, and a chair and table placed near the window, which at once admitted a soft refreshing breeze and commanded a view of some lovely country around.

"Mademoiselle need not trouble herself for some hours," said Marie, when all was ready. "Madame has to go out and will not return till six, and dinner is served at seven. It will be a charming repose for the pauvre mademoiselle."

Leila gave a grateful smile and thanks to the kindly girl, and Marie departed quite happy.

"Ah, you'll est jolie," soliloquised the Frenchwoman, "and as it seems not altogether Angloise in her looks nor her ways. She is sweeter and more graceful than those stiff, cold Islanders; she is worthy to be French."

And with this mot de compliment, the best a Frenchwoman could give, Marie departed on her other duties. Mat Somers was closeted with Madame di Ballard for some half hour or more, but as part of that time was occupied by the lady in writing and the guest in eating, there was but scant space for any conversation. Possibly the brother-in-law envoy of Mrs. Somers was not sufficiently in her confidence to make him a desirable substitute for the paper. Written communications neither tell any tales nor misrepresent the meaning of the writer.

At six o'clock Madame di Ballard re-entered her house, and in a short time afterwards Leila was called down from her pretty chamber. The lady was established in her own fauteuil, and pointed to a chair near her for the girl to seat herself, within near reach of her eyes and ears. At least, so Leila instinctively fancied as she saw those keen eyes bent up her.

"You look much better than when you arrived," was the first salutation. "Quite different. Let me look at you, child. I have seen too many faces not to comprehend yours."

The girl did colour a little at the fixed gaze, but still her eyelids did not drop, and the fair face retained its soft, pensive look, as foreign from guilt or design as from the lines and wrinkles that were appearing on that of her companion.

"You are fair and true enough to look at," she said at last—"perhaps dangerously so, but still it is impossible to interpret fully where there is youth and beauty to disguise the truth. Now listen, Miss Loraine. I told you a little while ago that I should keep you here some time before attempting to do anything for you, but while I was away this afternoon I was asked for a young person like yourself, and I think it would be a pity for you to lose the opportunity. Mind you, I shall take care that you have some superiors over you, and that you shall be watched till you have fully regained your character. With that proviso I think you may do in the situation."

"What is it?" asked Leila, anxiously. "I shall be most thankful if it is anything within my power to undertake."

"Oh, yes, there is no doubt of that," returned Madame Ballard. "It is to take care of and teach a delicate girl of some fourteen years old, I believe. Her mother has a great objection to servants about her, and wishes the governess to undertake all the duties belonging to the young lady's requirements."

"In other words to be a servant, I suppose," said the girl, flushing with irresistible pride as the memory of her antecedents rushed on her mind.

She, the supposed daughter of the Lorraine, the petted young lady of the castle, to be the schoolroom maid and governess in one, of a spoiled and perhaps wilful child. Such was her first thought at the announcement. But then came the crushing memory that it was also possible that her own station in life was not superior to the office.

She might be born in the class from which such officials are taken, and even without an honest and lawful claim for her to be so considered. In a brief moment the proud pang was crushed back into that suffering heart, and she quickly replied:

"Is it a friend of yours, madame, and what will be required of me? I will try to do my duty if I take the situation."

"I can hardly call it a 'friend,' for the lady is far above me in rank," returned Madame di Ballard. "For you see, Miss Loraine, I have more than one family who have known me for years and treated me with even more confidence and kindness than their equals in rank, and it is one of those with whom I am going to place you; it is the widow of a baronet, who, herself an Italian, is still resident in her own land. She, as I tell you, has one child, a daughter, and her whole life is bound up in her. I believe that if you really do your duty, she will think nothing is too much to do for your comfort. But like the rest of her countrywomen, she is very peculiar and exacting and impulsive. You must yield to her and study her whims and fancies, for she will not tolerate any opposition."

"I will try," said Leila, quickly.

"It will be best for you, for you can get a character then," returned madame, calmly. "I will not engage to do anything more for you unless you do. It is only out of friendship for Mrs. Somers that I am inclined to do this, as you may be certain, Miss Loraine."

Leila bowed her head meekly.

"What is the name?" she asked.

"Lady St. John. She is not much more than thirty now, but as is so common with Italians, she is far older than her years. Her daughter is named Giuletta, and a charming young creature she is. Indeed, if you can satisfy Lady St. John as to your abilities, you will be most fortunate. Now we will go to dinner," she added, as Marie appeared at the door.

And the subject was dropped, though Leila's heart was engrossed alike by the shrinking fear and the dawning hope that this new shelter promised. At least, it would give her an independence, and the instinct, if not the blood that warmed within her, caught at the prospect of freedom from obligation to any living being unconnected with her as a boon.

(To be Continued.)

#### THE BRIDAL WINE CUP.

"PLEDGE with wine—pledge with wine," cried the young and thoughtless William Wood; "pledge with wine," ran through the bridal party.

The beautiful bride grew pale—the decisive hour had come. She pressed her white hands together, and the leaves of the bridal wreath trembled on her brow; her breath came quicker, and her heart beat wilder.

"Yes, Marion, lay aside your scruples for this once," said the colonel in a low tone to his daughter—"the company expect it. Do not so seriously infringe upon the rules of etiquette; in your own home do as you please, but in mine for this once please me."

Every eye was turned towards the bridal pair. Marion's principles were well known. Henry

had been a convivialist, but of late his friends noticed the change in his manners, the difference in his habits, and to-night they watched him to see as they sneeringly said, if he was tied down to a woman's opinion so soon.

Pouring a brimming cup, they held it with tempting smiles towards Marion. She was very pale, though more composed; and her hand shook not as, smiling back, she gracefully accepted the crystal tempter and raised it to her lips. But scarcely had she done so when every hand was arrested by her piercing exclamation of:

"Oh, how terrible!"

"What is it?" cried one and all, thronging together, for she had slowly carried the glass at arm's length, and was fixedly regarding it as though it were some hideous object.

"Wait," she answered, while a light which seemed inspired shone from her dark eyes, "and— and I will tell you. I see, she added slowly, pointing one jewelled finger at the sparkling ruby liquid, "a sight that beggars all description; and yet listen—I will paint it for you if I can. It is a lovely spot; tall mountains crowned with verdure rise in the awful sublimity around; a river runs through, and bright flowers grow to the water's edge. There is a thick, warm mist that the sun seeks vainly to pierce. Trees, lofty and beautiful, wave to the airy motion of the birds; but there—a group of Indians gather, they sit to and fro with something like sorrow upon their dark brows. And in their midst lies a manly form, but his cheek, how deathly! his eye wild with the fitful fire of fever. One friend stands beside him—nay, I should say kneels, for see, he is pillowng that poor head upon his breast.

"Genius in ruins! Oh, the holy-looking brow! why should death mark it and he so young? Look how he throws back the damp curl! See him clasp his hands. Hear his thrilling shrieks for life? mark how he clutches at the form of his companion, imploring to be saved. Oh, hear him call piteously his father's name? See him twine his fingers together as he shrieks for his sister—his only sister, the twin of his soul—weeping for him in a distant native land?"

"See!" she exclaimed, while the bridal party shrank back, the untasted wine trembling in their faltering grasp and the colonel fell, overpowered, upon his seat. "See, his arms are lifted to Heaven; he prays, how wildly for mercy! Hot fever rushes through his veins. The friend beside him is weeping; awe-struck, the dark men move silently away, and leave the living and dying together."

There was a hush in that princely parlour, broken only by what seemed a smothered sob from some manly bosom. The bride stood yet upright, with quivering lip, and tears stealing to the outward edge of her lashes. Her beautiful arm had lost its tension, and the glass, with its troubled red waves, came slowly to the range of her vision. She spoke again; every lip was mute. Her voice was low, faint, yet awfully distinct; she still fixed her sorrowful glance upon the wine cup.

"It is evening now; the great white moon is coming up, and her beams lay gently on his forehead. He moves not; his eyes are set in their sockets, dim are their piercing glances, in vain his friend whispers the name of father and sister—death is there! Death—and no soft hand, no gentle voice to bless and soothe him. His head sinks back, one convulsive shudder, he is dead!"

A groan ran through the assembly. So vivid was her description, so unearthly her look, so inspired her manner, that what she described seemed actually to have taken place then and there. They noticed also that the bridegroom hid his face in his hands and was weeping.

"Dead," she repeated again, her lips quivering faster and faster, and her voice more and more broken. "And there they scoop him to a grave, and there, without a shroud, they lay him down in that damp, reeking earth. The only son of proud father, the only idolised brother of a fond sister. And he sleeps to-day in that distant country with no stone to mark the spot."

There he lies—my father's son, my own twin brother, a victim to this deadly poison. Father," she cried, turning suddenly, while the tears ran down her beautiful cheeks, father, "shall I drink it now?"

The form of the colonel was convulsed with agony. He raised not his head, but in a smothered voice he faltered:

"No, no, my child—no!"

She lifted the glittering goblet, and letting it fall suddenly to the floor, it was dashed in a thousand pieces. Many a tearful eye watched her movement, and, instantaneously, every wine glass was transferred to the marble table on which it had been prepared. Then as she looked at the fragments of crystal, she turned to the company, saying:

"Let no friend hereafter who loves me tempt me to peril my soul for wine. Not firmer are the everlasting hills than my resolve, God helping me, never to touch or taste the poison cup. And he to whom I have given my hand, who watched over my brother's dying form in that last solemn hour, and buried the dear wanderer there by the river, in that land of gold, will, I trust, sustain me in that resolve. Will you not, my husband?"

His glistening eyes, his sad, sweet smile, was her answer. The colonel left the room, and when, an hour after, he returned, and with more subdued manner took part in the entertainment of bridal guests, no one could fail to read that he, too, had determined to banish the enemy, at once and for ever, from his princely home.

Those who were present at the wedding can never forget the impressions so solemnly made. Many from that hour renounced for ever the social glass.—A. B.

### WHERE IS YOUR BOY TO-NIGHT?

LIFE is teeming with evil snares,  
The gates of sin are wide,  
The rosy fingers of pleasure wave  
And beckon the young inside.  
Man of the world, with open purse  
Seeking your own delight  
Pause, ere reason is wholly gone—  
Where is your boy to-night?

Sirens are singing on every hand,  
Luring the ear of youth,  
Gilded falsehood with silver notes  
Drowneth the voice of Truth.  
Dainty lady in costly robes,  
Your parlours gleam with light,  
Fate and beauty your senses steep,  
Where is your boy to-night?

Tempting whispers of royal spoil  
Flatter the youthful soul  
Eagerly entering into life,  
Evasive of all control.  
Needs are many, and duties stern  
Crowd on the weary sight,  
Father, buried in business cares,  
Where is your boy to-night?

Pitfalls lurk in the flowery ways,  
Vice hath a golden gate,  
Who shall guide the unwary feet  
Into the highway straight?  
Patient worker with willing hand,  
Keeping the home-hearth bright,  
Tired mother with tender eyes,  
Where is your boy to-night?

Turn his feet from the evil paths  
Ere they have entered in,  
Keep him unspotted while yet ye may,  
Earth is so full of sin.  
Ere he has learned to follow wrong,  
Teach him to love the right,  
Watch, ere watching is wholly vain—  
Where is your boy to-night?

W. E. M.

THE greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of legislation.

### A STOLEN SERMON.

An exchange tells this sermon-stealing story of a young man who stood before a presbytery in Scotland, asking ordination. Principal Robinson was moderator. The young man was rigidly examined, and asked to preach. The examination and the sermon were both satisfactory. The candidate retired, and the moderator said:

"I feel compelled to say that the sermon which the young man has preached is not his own. It is taken from an old volume of sermons, long out of print. Where he found it I do not know. I supposed the only copy of the volume to be found was in my library, and the candidate has had no access to that, I am certain."

The young man was called in, and asked if the sermon he had preached was his own.

"No," he frankly said; "I was pressed for time, and could not make a sermon in season. The sermon I preached was one which I heard Principal Robinson preach some time ago. I took notes of it, and liked it so well that I wrote it out from memory, and have preached it to-day."

The moderator was caught in his own trap, and there was nothing more to be said.

### LINKED LOVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### RECRIMINATION.

Yet think not but I mark, and I smile  
To mark thy poor and selfish wife.

SCOTT.

On the morning of Valentine Ponsonby's departure from Caerlau Winefrede Glendyr was very ill at ease. As has been said, despite the fact that she was the affianced bride of another man, the heiress could not succeed in banishing from her mind the image of the young manager. But now he was going from her sight for ever, and surely then forgetfulness would become easy.

It might have so become if the girl could have held to the conviction of Valentine's unworthiness which sprang into life when first Mr. Vannech had placed the letter in her hand. But as the days went on this conviction became less cogent, and on the previous day it had received a severe blow from Sir Cynric Rhys.

For the old man was inconsolable at the defection of Valentine, especially as the approaching union of Winefrede to Alan Fitzvesci would necessarily deprive him of the companionship of his beloved granddaughter. When she should have taken her farewell of the home of her childhood very dreary would become the lot of the sightless man.

There was not much in common between him and Mrs. Glendyr, and no shade of sympathy between Oscar and the veteran. But Sir Cynric had fondly hoped that when, in obedience to his own behests, Winefrede had departed for another home, he would have found a quiet and restful solace in the companionship of the strange young man whom he had learned to regard with a feeling almost paternal.

Perhaps the admiral's extreme age and helplessness rendered his complaints a little querulous. At any rate, Winefrede, when in her grandfather's study on the previous afternoon, had lost patience at the old man's bemoanings at the loss of his favourite.

Perhaps Sir Cynric's laudation of the young man touched on some dangerously responsive chord in the girl's own heart, and impelled her into a pronounced, almost fierce invective against Valentine, to the admiral's equal surprise and annoyance, as he was in utter ignorance of any ground for such an exhibition of feeling.

The old man's earnest advocacy and praise of

his protégé had awakened thoughts which broke Winefrede's rest that night and set her on the morning of Valentine's departure to a kind of restless activity.

In this mood she had strayed down to the gamekeeper's lodge which stood just on the margin of a plantation through which a footpath led to Caerlau. Under this man's care were placed some valuable exotic pheasants, which were especial pets of Miss Glendyr.

The gamekeeper was leaning on the top bar of the low garden gate in conversation with a short, stout individual whose back was turned towards the direction from which Miss Glendyr was coming. But she had no difficulty in recognising the figure of Mr. Swire.

As Winefrede came up to the spot the gamekeeper saluted her respectfully, and Mr. Swire stepped forward with extended hand and a beaming face, while his pleasant cordial greeting was that of an old and familiar friend.

There was a perceptible shade of coolness, however, in Miss Glendyr's response. Together, they turned from the gamekeeper's gate, and proceeded towards the castle. The pheasants could wait for her petting, Winefrede thought, and she could not delay learning how Swire would attempt to exculpate himself from the charge of bad faith—nay, positive treachery—which she was prepared to bring against him. That he had acted the part of a traitor Miss Glendyr could not doubt, although his motives in so doing were not apparent to her.

They could scarcely be personally mercenary ones, for she knew that Mr. Swire was wealthy. He had been the confidential friend of Sir Cynric Rhys for long years; he had been her father's trusted adviser. Yet that he had plotted to betray her to an adventurer Mrs. Ap-Howel's discovery conclusively proved. The girl's impatience led her to break the ice.

"My grandpapa is almost hopeless of your coming, Mr. Swire," she said. "You have broken so many promises and we do not expect that of you."

"It was unavoidable, my dear young lady, I assure you. I will explain all that to the admiral. And how is he?"

Then followed a string of inquiries regarding the other members of the family, to all of which Miss Glendyr's replies were of the briefest, and she presently went off at a tangent in a fresh reproach of the querist on the score of his broken promises.

"Oh, it was of little consequence," replied Mr. Swire, coolly. "Of course, I knew that Sir Cynric would want to consult me about the marriage settlements."

He threw a quick, sidelong glance at his companion as he spoke. Winefrede was silent, and her eyes were downcast.

"But, then," continued Mr. Swire, "I believe there is plenty of time for that, and in any case, as Mr. Ponsonby is confidential, the admiral would have got him to prepare any necessary drafts for the lawyers."

Once more that look of inquiring scrutiny. But this time his eyes met the full gaze of Miss Glendyr's, piercing and scornful.

"Do you think Mr. Ponsonby would be fitted for such an office?" she said, coldly.

"Undoubtedly. No man better."

"I do not share your opinion."

"Ah, how is that? I know Ponsonby is a clever fellow. I am satisfied Sir Cynric is highly satisfied with his management here. That I learn from the admiral's own letters."

"Written for him by Mr. Ponsonby himself?" interrupted Winefrede, scornfully.

"As an amanuensis, yes. That is part of Ponsonby's duties. But I have also heard from Mrs. Glendyr that your manager gives every satisfaction."

"It is to be hoped that the one whom you may select to replace him will be a truer man—that is, if such a selection may be safely left to Mr. Swire at all."

There could now be no doubt of the girl's acerbity of tone. The words seemed an explicit declaration of war. Swire stopped suddenly and drew himself up stiffly, while his good-humoured face became very grave.

"It is at least something unusual to hear Miss Winefrede Glendyr challenge the judgment of her family's oldest friend and adviser. If Sir Cynric and Mrs. Glendyr approve of the manager whom I have appointed, however, I do not think his removal will depend upon a young lady's caprices."

"Mr. Ponsonby has spared us all trouble on that score."

"Ah, how is that?"

"He has left Caerlau."

"Left Caerlau! When and for where?"

"This morning. I have no interest in his destination. But I heard from Owain Dinas that he was going abroad."

A heavy frown bent Swire's shaggy eyebrows.

"Ah, I understand! Poor fellow! He is not the first man who has wrecked his life on that rock. From Adam to Valentine Ponsonby it is the same old story—woman! woman! You have much to answer for, Miss Glendyr."

The girl's face flushed with sudden indignation.

"Do you dare to speak thus of and to me, sir!" she cried, angrily. "Will you so presume on the position of a reputed friend. Friend! No, a cowardly enemy, who would betray those whom he pretends to serve!"

"Are you mad? What do you mean?"

"I mean that you sent a man amongst us whose whole life was false—perhaps, even his very name—"

"Suppose it was? Is it a crime to bear an alias under any circumstance? This man had no name!"

"So much the worse! Yes, he suited your schemes the better, perhaps. It may interest you to become aware that I know all—all—and that I have only forbore to expose the plot in which you are both concerned lest the shock of such treachery should kill the feeble old man who trusted to you and your plausible instrument."

"Of what do you accuse me, Miss Glendyr?" asked Mr. Swire, in a deep, stern tone. Then, relaxing his set face, he added more lightly, "Of thinking Valentine Ponsonby a fitting part for even so proud a young lady as yourself?"

The girl's passion flamed up hotly at the speaker's assumption of indifference.

"Would you carry the affair off with this unblushing effrontery?" she cried. "I did not think that even your cold-blooded calculation could do this. And you are the man on whose counsel and aid I could have once relied as upon those of a father. You could coldly cast your eyes—whose father had loved you—you could cast her to this fortune-hunter as a prey—a victim."

"Young Ponsonby is no fortune-hunter," responded Swire, with a touch of pride in his tone. "As little such as I am the schemer whom you denounce."

"Indeed. What do you then say to a certain letter which he wrote you on the twenty-fifth of May? Ah, you see that I am well informed. What will you say when I tell you that I have a rough copy of that letter taken from this Mr. Ponsonby's blotting-book—and that I could, if I so chose, show to the world that evidence alike of his and your own treachery?"

Mr. Swire again knitted his shaggy brows, this time in puzzled cogitation. Suddenly a light seemed to break in upon his mind. He turned to Winefrede with an open countenance.

"Let me advise you, my dear Miss Glendyr, not to show that paper to the world. The world would say that Mr. Ponsonby ought to prosecute you for petty larceny. Ah, you women—you women, what harm ensues from your curiosities. However, Valentine cannot have gone far, and no mischief is done in that quarter. But," he confided, with a sigh, "my plan has failed, for you are the fiancée of the wrong man. Let us hasten to the castle, and I must explain to Sir Cynric—not to you at present."

"It is sufficient for me that I have discovered your plot—I will spare you. But I certainly have no desire to continue our conference. Mr. Swire," and with a haughty inclination of her head Miss Glendyr turned round and retraced her way to the lodge.

Swire proceeded in the direction of the castle, shaking his head solemnly and sadly.

"Who could have imagined that things would have turned out so untowardly? I don't know which is the greater idiot of the two—this girl or Bert—ahem! Valentine! Ah, well, the plan is a failure. But if he is tolerably heart whole I can make him a future in which he shall not even regret the loss of this hot headed girl. Poor thing! The loss is hers. Alan Fitzvesci is hard as flint and cold as ice. You have marred your own life's happiness, Winefrede Glendyr!"

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### GOOD FOR EVIL.

"See the deep cut on his head!  
Good-night to Marmon."

SCOTT.

ALMOST at that moment a horseman came riding up at speed. It was Farmer Morgan. He uttered a groan of consternation as his eyes fell on the pale face of the prostrate figure, and, springing from his horse, cried hoarsely:

"Great heaven! is he dead?"

Valentine's tear-dimmed eyes were bent on Fitzvesci's face and he seemed unconscious of the agitated query. Owain Dinas, however, whose ready clasp-knife had severed the lasso and permitted the terrified cause of the mischief to go free, now kneeling by the viscount's side thrust his hand in the young man's vest, and exclaimed:

"No, no! Morgan, his lordship is not dead. Ah, no, indeed, his heart is beating; but very faintly. If there was any way to get aid," and he looked round in anxious perplexity.

As Morgan's farm was not far distant, the Welshman proposed that one of them should ride there to procure means of conveying the wounded man thitherwhile another should speed for the nearest medical man and the third remain with the viscount. This latter duty Valentine insisted upon performing, somewhat to the surprise of Owain, who considered the grief and agitation of the ex-manager were inexplicable when the inimical relations between the injured man and Ponsonby were taken into account.

Neither Owain nor Morgan lost any time in starting on their respective errands, save that, at Valentine's request, the former ran down to a small stream which flowed through a grove at the distance of a few score yards, and brought from thence Ponsonby's hat full of water, and when the two men started, Valentine was removing the earth stains and the congealing blood from the viscount's brow with the tender care of a woman.

Scarcely had Owain and Mr. Morgan disappeared from sight, than Valentine was rewarded for his efforts in a manner he had hardly dared to hope. With a languid, fluttering movement, Fitzvesci raised his eyelids slightly and strove to take cognizance of the features of the man on whose knees he was resting. When at last he succeeded, an expression the nature of which Valentine could not conjecture sprang into the filmy orbs and the viscount strove to speak.

"Do not endeavour to talk, my lord," said Valentine, anxiously. "We shall soon have help to remove you hence, and medical skill to attend to your injuries, which, I trust, will not prove to be serious."

"Only mortal, Mr. Ponsonby," returned the other in an almost inarticulate whisper.

"Be of good heart, my lord," rejoined Valentine. "we will hope for better things."

"I am scarcely likely to be mistaken, my friend. I have seen too many men pass away by all forms of death to be in error when my own turn comes. But I shall last till you get me to the Castle. Heaven be thanked for that! Poor Winefrede!"

The soldier closed his eyes, his head fell back, and he lay silent for some minutes, breathing heavily, Valentine alternately watching his pale, disfigured countenance with keenest

anxiety, and scanning the horizon for traces of the eagerly expected succour. Presently Fitzvesci again looked up and spoke in the same faint whisper.

"Ponsonby," he said, "I could not have thought it possible that under any circumstances there could be amity between you and me. You could not save my life this time, but were it spared to me I would at least show that you had secured what you seem to have such a strange desire for—my friendship and regard."

A flash of sudden joy shot over Valentine's haughty face.

"Thank you, my lord," he said, in a voice broken by strong emotion, "and though I shall be far from Caerlau when you are again yourself and—"

He seemed to struggle with some internal emotion which caused momentary hesitation in his speech. Then by an effort he concluded:

"And lead your bride to the altar, it will yet be the greatest happiness earth still holds for me to know that you have uttered these words."

Again an interval of silence fell between the watcher and the watched, broken by occasional faint, well-nigh inaudible murmurs from the lips of the wounded man, amongst which Valentine could distinguish the phrases:

"Oh, that they would come quickly! Winefrede, Winefrede, shall I not see you once more?"

Then again addressing Valentine, Fitzvesci whispered, abruptly:

"You are a strange fellow, Ponsonby. Whatever made you so anxious for the goodwill of a man who viewed you with anything but friendship?"

A singular expression flashed across the ex-manager's pale face.

"You will learn the reason one day, my lord," he said.

At that juncture Valentine discerned Morgan with assistance in the distance.

"At last, at last, my lord, they are coming," he cried.

A flash of something akin to hope came into the dull eyes of the young soldier, then he murmured:

"Too late! too late! I am sped. I cannot see you. All grows dark. I implore you to carry to Winefrede the assurance that my last thought was of her. Heaven be merciful to me! And, Ponsonby."

His voice sank into the faintest whisper. Valentine bent down his ear to the pale lips. He could just catch a murmur, earnest, though so weak:

"Ponsonby, the reason of your friendliness?"

With a deadly pale face, and in a voice low as that of the wounded man, Valentine uttered a few words. For one fleeting moment they gave new energy to the viscount.

"Heavens! Can it be!" he murmured. "Powers above, grant me but a moment's strength! Valentine—Bertram—I have a message for—"

It was a final effort. Fitzvesci's voice died out in an inarticulate moan, and he lapsed either into death or unconsciousness, neither Ponsonby nor Farmer Morgan and his men, who had now reached the spot, could tell which. They raised the still form tenderly, and placing it in the vehicle which they had brought, proceeded towards Morgan's homestead.

But ere half the distance had been accomplished the little cortége was met by Owain Dinas and Doctor Dunbar. A halt was at once made, and the doctor rapidly examined the viscount's condition. The diagnosis was evidently unsatisfactory, for the surgeon shook his head gravely, saying:

"It will be as well to take his lordship on to the castle at once. Nothing will be gained by bearing him to Mr. Morgan's."

"But will not the transit over the longer distance be injurious, doctor?" queried Valentine, anxiously.

"It will not make any difference in this case. He will last the day," was the response.

"That only?"—was Valentine's low-toned and earnest interrogatory.

"No more. It is not in the power of medical

science to do more than mollify the sure passage from life. Nothing can save his lordship!"

At the confident assurance a yet deeper gloom overspread the haggard, anxious face of the ex-manager. The horses heads were turned at once and the shortest route to Caerlau taken. During the melancholy passage the viscount lay in the same condition.

Valentine and the surgeon rode on either side of the vehicle, which proceeded at the foot pace of a funeral procession, for so Dr. Duncan enjoined. Owain had spurred on in advance to prepare, so far as might be, the denizens of the castle for the sad return of one around whom so many hopes had centred.

When Caerlau was reached they carried the unconscious heir of Auriol to his room. They had been met in the broad hall by the various members of the family. Of these the two upon whom the blow came with the most stunning force were Sir Cynric Rhys and, strange as it may seem, Winefrede Glendyr.

The old admiral seemed a voiceless, tearless image of stricken sorrow. It might well be so, for the thing for which he had hoped and planned was now out of the region of possibility. And Winefrede, tearless too, appeared scarcely less stricken. Her conscience smote her as much as if this catastrophe had been indeed her own very work.

Had she not of her own free will promised to become Fitzvesci's wife, and had her heart not rebelled at the promise as soon as made and desired strongly that something should occur to prevent the union? Now the girl felt as if her wild wishes had been operative for evil—as if she had been gifted with the power of working ill to the man whose only sin against her at least had been that of loving her.

It was fortunate that there was one person at Caerlau who remained calm and knew what should be done and how to do it. This was Stephen Swire. Almost naturally he took the management, and in especial the care and, if it might be, consolation of the admiral.

Valentine had insisted that he should share with the nurse, whom Swire had quickly procured from the village, the task of watching by the viscount's couch. Swire at once acceded, saying to other volunteers in words inexplicable to those who were sufficiently collected to notice them, "It is his right."

Perhaps there was only one such, and she was Judith Vanneek. The hours passed on in the sick-chamber, and still Alan Fitzvesci lay changeless. Dr. Dunbar seldom left the room, Valentine Ponsonby never. The young man sat by the bedside watching the pale, disfigured face, now partially enveloped in surgical bandages, useless aids as Dr. Dunbar said himself, and only applied from that restless desire which even a medical man is not free from, to try to do something when really nothing remains to do by human help.

The afternoon was waning when suddenly, with a faint movement of eyelid and finger, life seemed again stirring in Lord Fitzvesci. Dunbar was ready with a restorative so soon as it could be administered. Presently the viscount's eyes opened and his dull glance fell upon Valentine. Then came a light of recognition, and presently speech—faint and low, but still articulate.

"I remember," he whispered. "How strange it all is. Bertram, forgive me."

The fingers of the right hand outside the bed-clothes moved vaguely. Valentine took them in his own with a tender pressure, and bent his lips softly on the white brow.

"Oh, Alan, let not the word be spoken between you and me."

"You will return to the old home when I have gone. He told me to seek for you. He told me of your last visit, and that his heart had yearned for you after he had driven you from his presence. You will go back and comfort the old man in his bitter sorrow. You will uphold the honour of the ancient race."

Valentine strove for answering words, but his voice was broken by uncontrollable emotion to an inarticulate sound.

"There is something else," continued the

viscount. "Doctor, is this not the last flicker of the expiring lamp?"

"I dare not mislead you, my lord. I fear that you are right."

"It is well. I do not fear it. Summon Sir Cynric and Mrs. and Miss Glendyr hither, and the chaplain."

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

PEACE.

His faith made plain,

He won his rank and lands again.

SCOTT.

MEANWHILE, Sir Cynric Rhys sat in the most seduced of his own suite of rooms, a drooping and despondent man. He was not alone, for Mr. Swire had followed, and placing himself by the admiral's side, was essaying the part of condoler, and if it might be, consoler.

"It is useless to talk, Swire," the old man was saying, impatiently, almost petulantly. "Doctor Duncan assures me that there is no hope."

"I am quite of Duncan's opinion," responded Mr. Swire.

"Then you must realise the utter downfall of my hopes. You, and you only, know their extent and importance. You know, for you are the only man upon earth to whom the fatal secret has been confided. Since that miserable moment, now forty years ago, when I destroyed that lost will of the grandfather of Alan Fitzvesci, and thereby inherited the broad lands which are the true heritage of the Earl of Auriol. I have never known peace. My life has been one long remorse."

"The Earl of Auriol is rich enough without the lands of which you speak, Sir Cynric."

"That matters nothing. The crime, the dishonour, remains. I was poor then, and the temptation was too great for my probity. True, the old earl had, in an impulse of blind dislike to his son, left me them by a former will. But when death was nigh he would have done justice had not I balked it by my sin."

"Ay, the Fitzvesci are a hard family," rejoined Mr. Swire. "The sires are much given to hate their sons, and to the doing them tardy right when earth is fading from their old eyes."

"What will you say of me then, my oldest friend? Oh, I cannot die under the burden of the remorse which I now bear. Neither will I leave the weight of this curse on my family. All must be acknowledged now to Auriol."

"Why not present him with the estates by a deed of gift?"

"You know his inexorable pride. He would tear the parchment up and throw it in my face. A Fitzvesci accept a gift, even from a friend. Never!"

"You are right. But there is yet another and a better way."

"What do you mean?"

"Even if Alan die the direct line of Auriol will not become extinct."

"That is nonsense."

"No. The earl had two sons."

"Of course. But Bertram Fitzvesci died not long since."

"No. It was so believed in many quarters—as for instance here at Caerlau. But he still lives."

"You are telling me this to calm my trouble. Is this right, Swire? Should you treat even an aged man like myself as a child?"

"I am not doing so, Sir Cynric. Yet Bertram Fitzvesci lives. I have seen him—spoken to him since my return from the Continent."

"Then why the report?"

"Listen. I am, as you know, closely related to the late Countess of Auriol. She was not a patrician, but like myself belonged to a wealthy commercial family. She married Auriol upon the compulsion of her friends, forsaking one to whom she had been betrothed in youth. The marriage was an unhappy one, for she had no affection for the earl—who could have for that cold, cruel spirit? But she made him a good wife. Alan Fitzvesci was born of the union. Some years after his birth the man to whom the countess had been betrothed became her

husband's guest—you knew him—Sir Bertram Saltoun."

"Yes, I knew him well. Go on!"

"The earl was not aware that any closer tie than that of ordinary acquaintanceship had existed in the past between his countess and Saltoun. The latter was one who fascinated men almost as readily as he did women and the earl grew to delight in his society. During this man's stay at the earl's seat the countess bore her second son. She wished him to be named Bertram, to which her husband readily agreed, the more so as it was a family name of the Fitzvesci also. Saltoun was one of the child's sponsors.

"A notable characteristic of Sir Bertram Saltoun was his inordinate love of gambling alike upon the turf and on the board of green cloth. It was with him a passion—a madness. Yet fortune usually forsook him. It is supposed that he was more than once aided by the purse of the countess, and even by that of the earl himself. But nothing could save a gambler alike so infatuated and so unlucky as Saltoun, and at last the crisis came, and he was forced to fly from his native land, pursued both by vindictive creditors and the agents of the law."

"Your story is not without interest, Swire," broke in the admiral, "but I cannot see how it brings Bertram Fitzvesci to life."

"Patience, and you will see. Well, after Saltoun's flight, Lady Auriol had from the first shown that she viewed her husband with but little affection and as time went on her indifference increased. The earl was always a hard man, and this, which he could not fail to see, hardened him more. His only consolation seemed to be his youngest son, whom he loved fondly, perhaps because the boy was dissimilar in every respect to himself. In process of time the health of the countess began to fail. The physicians shook their heads gravely and said her only chance lay in removing to a milder climate than that of Britain. Nice was selected. The earl did not care to leave his own country and his parliamentary duties, and, truth to tell, his wife did not seem especially desirous of his company. It was eventually decided that Lady Damar, a widowed half-sister of the Earl of Auriol, should accompany the countess as a companion, and Lady Auriol left England, to return no more.

"The eldest son had already received his commission and had accompanied his regiment to India; the younger son was at Eton. Neither saw their mother again in life. Four years passed and Bertram Fitzvesci, still the idol of his father, had been a year at Oxford when the Earl of Auriol received a telegram from his sister to let him know that he must lose not a moment in proceeding to Nice if he expected to see his wife alive. Auriol departed at once. As he got out of the railway carriage at Nice he met upon the platform his former friend Sir Bertram Saltoun, who was just leaving the place. From him he learned that the countess was dead. The earl did not pretend a grief he did not feel, but made preparations to have his wife's body at once brought home to the family vault. His sister and his dead wife's worldly belongings also accompanied him."

"Auriol merely viewed his last meeting with Saltoun as a chance coincidence. No doubt of his wife had ever crossed his mind. But some days after the obsequies of the countess, her husband was looking over and destroying her papers when he came across a packet of letters couched in terms of the warmest affection. They were those written by the baronet in the days of their engagement. Nor was that all. The earl found later epistles written by Saltoun from Belgium to Lady Auriol at Nice, which by their tone argued a considerable degree of familiarity between their writer and recipient. The thought waked that usually cold stern man to sudden madness. He sent for his sister and put to her a series of savage interrogations, from the answers to which he learned that Sir Bertram Saltoun had often visited the countess while at Nice.

"It was sufficient. Auriol at once concluded that not only had the countess been unfaithful



[AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.]

to him but that her infidelity was of long standing. And this boy whom he had loved, bore his mother's face and bore too her paramour's name. No true son he of the ancient line of Fitzvesci. A passionate hatred replaced in the earl's mind the love he had once borne the boy. He sent for him from Oxford, overwhelmed the youth with mad but unintelligible invectives, bade him under peril of his deadliest curse abjure his name, and hurled at the astonished youth a purse of gold, which represented a quarterly allowance contingent on Bertram's disappearance from society, and above all from his father's face."

"And the lad broke his heart and died," remarked Sir Cynric Rhys."

"He did nothing of the kind. He had too much of the Fitzvesci pluck for anything so idiotic. He left the money where it lay and fled from his father's imprecations. He laid down the name which was denied him, not that he relinquished his right thereto but that he respected his father's command, mad as it was, and feared his father's curse. And he began life anew with the resolve to gain his bread by his own labour. But if Alan Fitzvesci die Bertram inherits the earldom."

"But the stain on his birth, Swire?"

"There is none. Anyone who even glances at Bertram's profile sees a Fitzvesci of the truest strain, although his full face shows the mother's thoughtful tenderness."

The admiral gave a little start.

"Surely," he cried, "Bertram Fitzvesci is not—is not—"

"Valentine Ponsonby. Yes, you have guessed rightly. A noble scion of a good old stock. I sent him here in part to try what he was made of, in part because I hoped to subserve your plans. I considered that it was likely Winefrede might learn to love him for himself alone—and I believed him worthy of her."

"I recognised his face!" murmured the admiral. "By Jove, something told me that he must be of the Fitzvesci breed. But you have done foolishly, Swire. You are too old for

childish plots with your old friends, especially when, as at present, no good comes of them."

"At least no ill has come of this, admiral. The young fellow managed to save his brother's life once, and would have done so again had the Fates but been propitious. And if Winefrede was not clear-headed or true-hearted enough to love the man for what he is so much the worse for her. But if Alan die she may come to a better mind, for I have read between the lines of some of Bertram's letters to me, and unless my old wits have gone wool-gathering the ex-manager is by no means an object of indifference to your granddaughter. I intend to seek the earl, for I was by his wife's dying bed and know that she was true to him, even in thought. So in the event of Alan's recovery, Bertram will yet be acknowledged by his father. Or if the obstinate old brute be impervious to conviction Bertram shall inherit my wealth and there will be few English commoners richer than he, so your mind may be at ease, dear Sir Cynric. And now I will go and make inquiry after the patient."

As Mr. Swire passed along the corridor he met pale-faced Winefrede going apparently to the admiral's apartments. When he had passed her a curious little smile came to the old man's face, and he said to himself with a half-chuckle:

"I suspect our proud young Welshwoman will hear part of that story, and that it will effect a change in her opinions regarding a certain young man."

An hour later, the principal members of the family at Caerlau were gathered together in the sick-room, at the viscount's request. The young man's life was ebbing fast. It needed the administration of a strong restorative to enable him to speak. He signified to Valentine—or as we should now call him Bertram—that he should raise him on the bed.

"My battles are over," he murmured, "and it isn't a very dignified death to die after being

trailed along at the heels of that confounded brute, but we must all go when the 'route' comes, and my farewells must be brief."

He faintly pressed the hands of each one present, beginning with Sir Cynric, Winefrede, whose eyes were tear-filled, being the last to approach the bed on the opposite side of that upon which Bertram was sitting supporting his brother's lax frame.

"Kiss me, Winefrede," the viscount murmured, "for the last, almost the only time."

The girl bent down and did as he requested.

"And you, Bertram," he went on.

The young man also stooped and pressed a caress upon his brother's disfigured face.

"Your hand, Bertram, the right one." The wounded man was holding Winefrede's hand in one of his own. He drew the girl's and that of his brother until they came into contact above his recumbent form.

"You lose one of our race, Winefrede, he said, "but you gain a better man than I—one thoroughly noble in thought and deed. Bertram, I have seen she loved you; our lives have been strangely tangled, brother, even our loves have been linked. Take your bride home to our ancient hall and comfort the old man. Farewell. Leave me now, for a soldier's life sees much of evil, and my last thoughts must be of Heaven."

They passed from the room, and the few remaining moments of Alan Fitzvesci's life were shared but by the chaplain.

A year later and the bridal of Winefrede and Bertram was celebrated at Caerlau. The Earl of Auriol had laid aside for the occasion the mourning habiliments he wore for his eldest son, and Sir Cynric Rhys, very old and feeble now, agreed with Mr. Swire that Fate had arranged the united fortunes of the houses of Glendyr and Fitzvesci much better than human agency could have done.

[THE END.]



[THE SPY.]

ROB ROY MACGREGOR;  
OR,  
THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN.  
A ROMANCE OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Amy Robsart," "Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE ARREST.

OTHELLO "Where will you that I go to answer  
this your charge?"

B.: "To prison till fit time of law and course of  
direct session call thee to answer."

The Highlanders were as amiable now as they had been disagreeable and aggressive before. They knew that the bailie was an honest man, who had done a good turn to many a gentleman of long descent and scanty means. A fresh supply of liquor was sent for and they all pledged one another, Mr. Jarvie promising a second time that Invershalloch should have the best new plaid that money could buy. Galbraith had been drinking heavily and his tongue was loosened.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "I dinna ken on what business Mr. Jarvie has come into this country, but I'll een speak my mind, he's varra welcome, and any man who does him an injury will ha'e to account to me; here's his health in a pint stoup, and to the deil wi' the mon who refuses to drink it."

The toast was drank with enthusiasm. Invershalloch shook the bailie by the hand, and the compact of friendship seemed to be firmly cemented.

"We are ganging to Stirling," said the bailie, "to get some siller that is our lawfu' due. This

explanation will account for our presence here. It is not for the money that you owe me, Mister Galbraith, that I have ventured into the Highlands."

Galbraith burst out laughing.

"I ken the bailie was always a wise mon," he answered, "and it's nae use trying to catch the wind. I hae my bonnie broad acres, but money and I are not acquainted wi' each other."

"You'll confess, however, that I lent you a fair sum on the land up there at the clachan."

"So—so!" cried Galbraith, "and who's denying it? Let the pint stoup pass and talk business anither time. If you wait till I pay you it will be a gude auld age when you die."

Invershalloch was no more sober than his friend.

"Business is for bailies and siccansfolk," he said; "we are Hieland shentlemans and—"

"Stop, Invershalloch," interrupted Galbraith. "I'll na' a word said against my old and esteemed friend, Mr. Nicoll Jarvie; we are both of one mind. I owe him some money and he thinks I will not pay him; faith, I'm of the same opinion unless—"

He paused and lowered his voice.

"Hey, speak on," said Invershalloch.

"Unless the king comes to his own again, and I hope I may live to see it, though I say naething against the house of Hanover. It is not for me to malign King George, yet there are kings and kings, and I drink to the one over the water."

Frank did not raise his glass to his lips at this toast, which did not escape the notice of the Highland laird.

"The toast does not seem to please you, Mr. Osbaldestone," remarked Galbraith.

"No, sir. I frankly admit that it does not," replied Frank.

"Aweel, there are those of your name who are doing all they can for King James."

"Perhaps you allude to my cousin Rashleigh, who—"

"I dinna ken his name. Let it pass. I was wrang to introduce business or politics into our

discussion. Let us discuss the bottle this nicht. To-morrow we may come to hard blows."

The bailie thought this was a favourable opportunity for questioning the Highlander as to the object which had brought him to the clachan of Aberfoil.

"Something must ha' brought you so far from home, Major Galbraith," he observed.

"That's true," replied Galbraith. "We are to meet the Lennox Militia and capture the outlaw Macgregor."

"Ay, ay," said Invershalloch. "He shall swing for levying black mail on us."

"I'm thinking you will have a difficult job," the bailie continued. "Rob Roy is not easily ta'en."

"We have a plan," answered Galbraith. "There is a creature he knows well. His name is Morris."

"Morris?" cried Frank.

"Yes, he's been a guager, or something of that kind, a slinkin' hound that I wad na' throw tripe to. Weel, Morris has appointed a meeting wi' him, and when the militia comes up we will tak' him."

Frank was deeply disgusted with this exposure of the treachery of Morris, and hoped sincerely that the project would fail. The brandy passed quickly, but he declined to indulge in the deep potations which did not seem to do the Highlander any harm.

Rising from the table, he excused himself, and went outside to see if Andrew had taken care of the horses. Going to the stable, he found his servant engaged in grooming the beasts by the light of a tallion candle.

"Hard at work, Andrew?" he observed.

"Ay, ay, sir, though it's ill wark wi' sich a light as this and on an empty stomach," replied Andrew.

"Why did not you go into the inn and ask for what you wanted? We shall have something cooked directly."

"I can wait. I'd rather fast than hear swords clash."

"Have you seen anyone since we have been here?"

"Hoot," said Andrew. "I must be daft. That Dougal creature, as the baillie ca's him, has been in the stable, an' he gie me a wee bit note for your honour."

"Why did you not bring it in at once?" asked Frank, angrily.

"Have I not told your honour that I heard the swords clinken and clanken, and that I ha' no mind for sic a kind o' foolin'?"

"Give me the letter, you rascal."

Andrew took a piece of dirty, crumpled paper from his pocket and handed it to his master, who snatched up the *envelope* and began to read it. The contents were as follows:

"To FRANK OSBALDISTONE, Esquire.

"I am sorry I cannot meet you as I agreed at the clachan of Aberfoil. There is danger in the air. It is necessary that I should keep a good look out. Wait where you are with my esteemed kinsman, Baillie Nicoll Jarvie, for a few days and I will find a means of communicating with you. A friend you wot of, Di Vernon, is in this district, and I am sure you will be glad to hear that. Keep a good heart, for all things are working in your favour, though I fear they are going *wrong* in mine."

"*Rob Roy Macgregor.*"

Frank read this letter with conflicting emotion. He was sorry that he could not meet Rob for a day or two, but glad that he knew the danger he was in. That Dougal was a spy he did not doubt, and he felt that if Rob was an outlaw, hunted down by the militia, he had many friends on the hills.

Galbraith and Invershalloch would not find it so easy to capture him as they imagined, yet it was impossible to deny that he was in considerable danger. The intelligence that Miss Vernon was in the Highlands of Scotland caused his heart to flutter strangely, but at the same time it made him look more cheerfully on his own affairs. She was his friend, and with her to help him, he did not doubt that the plans of Rashleigh would be circumvented.

All he wanted was to get back the bills, money and securities that Rashleigh had taken away, and without which his father's business must go to ruin. Returning with a lighter heart to the room where he had left the baillie, he heard sounds of music. To his astonishment he found that a piper had been called in, and that Galbraith was dancing a reel to the inspiring strains of the bagpipe.

"Ma conscience," exclaimed the baillie, as the Highlander concluded his exertions, "if that is na the best reel I ha' ever seen danced. I hope I may never sit in kirk again."

Invershalloch was equally generous in his applause, and the excited laird was again on the point of dancing when a peculiar noise was heard outside. It was the measured tramp of infantry on the march. There was no mistaking the measured tread with which well-drilled armed men stepped together.

"Whist!" said Galbraith, "that will be the troops from the garrison."

"Ay," replied Invershalloch. "I heard that they were to join us wi' the Lennox Militia and a company of Grenadiers. We will ha' little difficulty in catching Rob."

"Halt!" cried the voice of the commanding officer.

The company—which consisted of about sixty rank and file, attired in the red coats which even then distinguished English troops—came to a stand. They were Grenadiers, the term being derived from the fact that a certain quantity of men carried hand grenades to cast among the enemy and throw them into confusion. The captain was an English gentleman named Thornton, and he entered the room without ceremony, followed by a non-commissioned officer and two men.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," he exclaimed. "Have I the honour of addressing Mr. Galbraith of Endrick and the laird of Invershalloch?"

"We are the persons you have named, sir," replied Galbraith.

"It is well. I have been instructed to render you and your command all the assistance that lies in my power to capture an outlaw and robber named Maegregor."

"That's Rob Roy," said Galbraith. "We are wi' you there, captain, but our men will not be here until to-morrow, so you'll have to take up quarters for the night in the clachan of Aberfoil. Sit down and drink a mitchkin of whisky to the health of the king."

"I would gladly drink that toast were it not contrary to my habits, for I never drink while on duty."

He regarded Frank and the baillie with some curiosity.

"You will pardon me," he resumed, "if I inquire who these gentlemen are?"

"There is no reason to conceal my name," replied Frank, "but at the same time I do not feel inclined to give it you unless I know your reason for asking it."

"By all means. I have received orders from Edinburgh to arrest two suspected persons who are travelling in the Highlands."

"On what charge?"

"That I do not know. If you can give a good account of yourself I shall not molest you."

"If it please you, captain," exclaimed the baillie, "we are on our ain business. I am Nicoll Jarvie of the Saut Market, frae Glasgow, and this is my young friend, Mr. Francis Osbaldistone."

"Hah!" said Captain Thornton, "that name has an ill sound in a loyal ear. We have heard of Mr. Osbaldistone's pranks in Northumberland. It will be my unpleasant duty to place you under arrest, gentlemen."

The baillie was greatly disconcerted.

"Och!" he exclaimed, "what a fule I was to quit Glasgow. Ma conscience, a man auld never put his hand or his foot out further than he can draw it back again."

The officer ordered them to give up their arms and to submit to be searched, to see if they had any treasonable documents in their possession. This brought an indignant flush to Frank's face, but it would have been madness to resist. He gave up his sword and pistols, but he had no papers with him, except the note which he had just received from Rob Roy. When the captain looked at this he became very grave.

"What have we here," he said. "Why I find you actually in direct written communication with the outlaw and traitor whom we are striving to arrest."

"How is that?" inquired Galbraith.

"Here is a letter from Rob Roy to Mr. Osbaldistone."

"I did na think that Mr. Osbaldistone was that kind of a person," remarked Galbraith, "or I wadna ha' drunk wi' him or the baillie."

"Hoot, toot," said Invershalloch. "There is no telling what an Englishman will do."

He turned his back contemptuously upon Frank.

"Where did you get this letter and who gave it to you?" asked Captain Thornton.

"I must decline to answer that or any other question," replied Frank.

"Your silence aggravates the suspicion already existing against you."

"I cannot help it; all I can say is that Macgregor wants to see me on purely private business."

"You will consider yourselves my prisoners," said the Captain.

At this moment there was a noise outside and the soldiers entered the room, with a captive struggling in their grasp.

"A spy, Captain," reported a sergeant.

"How do you know that he is a spy?"

The sergeant replied that he caught him in the act of creeping around the soldiers, as if counting them, and that he tried to steal some muskets which were piled in front of the inn. On hearing this the Captain began to interrogate the prisoner, who was no other than our old friend Dougal.

"Ma conscience!" said the baillie, "it is the

Dougal creature. Why, sir, there's nae mair harm in Dougal than there is in a sheep."

"Allow me to judge of that," answered the Captain; "now, fellow, reply to me truthfully or I'll hang you to the first tree."

"Ay, ay, she'll speak the truth to the Sassenach gentleman," rejoined Dougal.

"Are you in any way connected with the rebel robber Maegregor?"

"She's his ain gillie."

"Indeed! this is important. Where is he now?"

Dougal appeared to hesitate.

"Speak out, or by heaven I'll hang you," cried the Captain.

"The chief's aye far off," answered Dougal.

"Has he many men with him?"

"Abou a score."

"Now if I spare your life, and give you a reward of five pounds, will you conduct me to his hiding place at daybreak?"

"Na," said Dougal, shaking his head, "she canna be my laird."

"Oh! very well," exclaimed Captain Thornton carelessly, "we shall see."

He made a sign to the sergeant, who went out and shortly returned with a rope.

"Do your duty," said the Captain.

The sergeant placed the rope round Dougal's neck and was about to drag him from the room, when the creature emitted signs of the utmost terror.

"Stop," he exclaimed, "she can't die yet. She'll tak' the redcoat to Rob Roy, who's two miles awa up in the clachan."

Captain Thornton smiled.

"I thought we should make you find your tongue," he said, adding, "let him be closely guarded; at daybreak we will penetrate to the lair of the robber."

Dougal was taken away looking very dejected. The disgust of the baillie at Dougal's weakness and treachery was plainly evident.

"I didna think the creature was that bad," he remarked. "Poor Rob! his enemies are likely to get the best of him."

Soon afterwards Galbraith and Invershalloch went away to meet the Militia, who were supposed to be on the march, and Frank and the baillie, throwing themselves on the floor, snatched a few hours sleep, of which they stood much in need.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE AMBUSH.

Scars could they hear or see their foes  
Until at weapon's point they close  
In clouds of smoke and dust. MARION.

WHEN day broke in the far-off east the inspiring notes of the bugle woke up everybody. Captain Thornton informed his prisoners that they would have to accompany him in his attempt to capture The Macgregor; he did not require them to fight, but he could not let them out of his sight.

Andrew was told to remain at the inn with the horses, until the return of the expedition. It was clear that Captain Thornton imagined he should have an easy task in taking Rob Roy by surprise, for what could a handful of ragged, half-armed Highlanders do against a company of his majesty's Grenadiers.

If successful, he should be ahead of the militia and all the glory would be his. The inhabitants of the village of Aberfoil came out en masse to the number of a hundred and amused themselves by cursing the soldiers in Gaelic, which, as they did not understand what was said, had little or no effect on them.

The day was misty, and a thin, drizzling rain began to fall. Dougal was placed between two Grenadiers, who had orders to blow out his brains if he tried to escape, or in any way play false. In front were the Grenadiers, then came the drums; at the head of the column, which was formed four deep, rode the captain. Frank and the baillie, closely guarded, brought up the rear.

Marching at quick step to the beat of the

drum, the soldiers left the village, but when they were in the open country the music ceased.

"Silence in the ranks," cried the captain. "Bear rank, take close order, by fours right, quick march."

As they proceeded, the road became very difficult. They entered a hilly country, and had to thread a narrow defile, overlooked by beetling crags. The baillie shook his head, and opined that danger threatened them.

"The Red Macgregor is na fule," he remarked. "It wad gar me greet if he should be ta'en, but I think the soldiers will get the worst of it."

"What gives you that opinion?" asked Frank.

"There's a look in the ee of that Dougal creature which inclines me to believe that he is leading the British into a trap. Rob can get the Glengyle folk and the Glenfinlas and Balquidder lads to gie him aid. There will be hot wark sume or my name's not Nicoll Jarvie."

Dougal did not appear so dejected as they progressed. His step was more springy and elastic; his eye had a bright sparkle in it, and his manner altered. He seemed to listen to every sound.

"Could you not bring us to the robber's glen by any different route?" asked Captain Thornton.

Dougal replied that it was the only road he knew.

"Dinna fash yourself," he added. "You'll be there soon enough, perhaps sooner than you like."

"What do you mean, you rascal?" inquired the Englishman.

"There will be hard knocks. You may surprise the red chief, but he'll not be caught like a rat in a trap."

"If you have betrayed me your life shall pay the penalty."

"Ay, she's ready to die if she has," answered Dougal, doggedly. "I said I'd take you to The Macgregor and you're near the meet now."

Suddenly the Pioneers, who had been thrown out in advance like skirmishers, fell back on the main body, reporting that the head of the glen was occupied by Highlanders. On receiving this information the captain ordered the Grenadiers to light their fires and advance.

"Steady, my lads," he exclaimed, "you will advance at the double, in column of companies. Shoulder to shoulder, and God save King George."

The soldiers responded with a hearty cheer. When the top of the gorge was reached, the troops received a volley, and it appeared as if the heather was swarmed with Highlanders, who sprang up on all sides. The Grenadiers threw their grenades, and the soldiers returned the fire of their assailants. All was confusion. The Dougal creature managed to slip away from his captors and disappeared in the smoke of the battle.

"Run for your life," said the baillie. "Dougal's gone, and we maun be light of feet, too. The quarrel's none of ours."

Frank found this very reasonable advice, and they both ran helter skelter from the fight, and reaching a rock, crouched down under its shelter, so as to be out of the way of any stray bullet. The rain had made the ground slippery, and the baillie unluckily fell down the side of the gorge.

When a dozen yards down his coat was caught by the branch of a small tree, and there he hung suspended, filling the air with cries for assistance. Frank said that he was in no peril, and did not think fit to leave his position of safety for the present.

Anxiously he watched the progress of the struggle between the troops and the Highlanders, who evidently outnumbered the former. There was no doubt now that Dougal had purposely led the soldiers into an ambuscade, and that Rob Roy's men were awaiting their coming. Every moment the number of the redcoats seemed to decrease, and the field was dotted with their fallen bodies.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE VICTORY OF THE CLAN.

Of noble port, athletic limb, and eye  
Eager for conquest, not afraid to die,  
With robes loose flowing round her queen-  
like form.

The peerless Helen stood.

Even if Frank Osbaldestone had been armed, he would not have considered himself under any obligation to fight on behalf of the redcoats. Though an Englishman and a loyal subject, he had been made a prisoner in what he thought, and with some good reason, to be an arbitrary manner.

Neither by word or deed had he conspired against the Government. He was travelling in the Highlands on what was a matter of business concerning his father's welfare and his own, and it was fair to affirm that Captain Thornton had acted in a very high-handed manner in putting him and Mr. Jarvie under arrest.

It was evident that the battle was going against the English, for they were entrapped in the glen. Their retreat was cut off in the rear; on one side was a ridge of precipitous hills, and on the other was a declivity which shelved down almost perpendicularly to a loch or lake, which was of unknown depth, its surface being black and sullen. In their immediate front were the wild, shaggy, and treacherous clansmen, fierce and pitiless, as the Campbells ever were. They had forgotten nothing in the past, and the English had taught them no kindness in the present.

These rough men loved their chief, Rob Roy Macgregor, with an unselfish devotion which it is difficult to understand in the present day. They followed him to the fight, and they feasted with him if they returned successful with their booty to his Highland stronghold. If anything happened to him they would all feel it, and any attack made on him was resented by one and all as a personal grievance.

Frank had been disarmed at the inn, and could not have assisted Captain Thornton even if he had had the inclination, which, as we have hinted, he had not, so he anxiously watched the unequal contest from his place of safe concealment. At intervals the groans of the baillie arose, and his impatient exclamations had much of the ludicrous about them.

Frank would gladly have assisted him had he thought it would have been advisable to quit the spot which sheltered him, but while there was the prospect of a stray bullet finding a billet in his body he determined not to run the risk, so the baillie hung suspended by his coat tails and bemoaned his sad fate.

By degrees the firing slackened. Instead of the goodly array of soldiers with which he had entered the glen the unfortunate Captain Thornton found himself with only fifteen men, the others being either killed or wounded. He was exposed to a withering fire, and his men stood gallantly by him with the proverbial pluck and tenacity of English soldiers. He himself was as yet unharmed, though it would have been extremely hazardous to say how long he would remain so.

Seeing the hopeless nature of the contest in which he had so rashly engaged, and feeling that he had done all he could for the honour of the Grenadiers and for the service to which he belonged, he attached a white handkerchief to the point of his sword and ordered his men to cease firing. This token of surrender was received by the Highlanders with wild shrieks and yells more resembling the howls of savages than the cries of civilised men. They saw that they were victorious. Their clan had triumphed, and they rushed forward to disarm their stubborn foe.

With a celerity that was perfectly marvellous the soldiers were stripped of their arms and their clothes, even their boots being taken from them to adorn the erst naked foot of a naked Celt. It was degrading and disagreeable, but they had to submit, for to the victors belong the spoils of war.

When Frank saw that the battle was over he

ventured forth without attracting any attention to himself, determined to render what assistance he could to the baillie in the first instance, and secondly to seek Dougal and claim his protection. This was the more necessary, as the Highlanders were not at all likely to make any distinction between their prisoners, and that they would be speedily discovered and made captives Frank could not doubt.

Everyone would think that they belonged to the party of soldiers. No one would believe that they were friends—nay, invited guests of The Macgregor—unless Dougal made an explanation. The clansmen probably spoke nothing but Gaelic, in which case Frank and the baillie would not be able to make themselves intelligible.

Not once during the fight had he seen anything of Rob Roy, though he had remarked a tall, handsome, dark-haired woman, with flashing black eyes, sword in hand, encouraging her vassals, and herself aiding them in attacking the redcoats. This he imagined to be Helen Macgregor, the wife of the Highland chieftain, of whom he had from time to time heard a great deal. From all accounts she was not of the most angelic disposition.

It was said that Rob himself stood somewhat in awe of his better half. Her hatred for the English was intense, and she cared as little for conventional respectability as did Rob. She was the dame of two wolves that is to say, the mother of two boys named Robert and Hamist, who had fought at her side during the whole of the time the struggle had been going on. The wife was the counterpart of the father, and the sons resembled both.

It was with some little difficulty that Frank contrived to unhook the baillie, and he could not get him down from his perch without cutting off a large portion of his coat tail, which gave the short and corpulent magistrate a ludicrous appearance. He had been seized with a violent fit of coughing as he swung in the breeze like the sign-board of an inn, and it was in this style that he addressed his deliverer:

"Ma conscience, Mr. Osbaldestone. Ugh! ugh! I dinna ken whether you ca' it friendly or not to leave a pur' body to be tossit by the wind, like as he was a chiel's kite stickit to a bough."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Jarvie," replied Frank, "but—"

"Hoot, toot! least said soonest mended," interrupted the baillie. "It was on your business I came into this awfu' country, leaving out the question of my ain gear, meaning the thousand puns Robin owes me, and I do think that you might have come to my assistance."

"How could I with the bullets flying about?"

"They were flyin' aboot my ears, mon. However, the deil found fault wi' the water when he couldn't swim. I might ha' had an ounce o' meelin in my wheem for a' you cared!"

"This is unjust. Your coat, being made of good stuff, held you up and—"

"Ugh, ugh! This cough will choke me. Say nae mair. You did not sae muckle as try to help me, but I thank my stars I buy gude cloth as you say. It wad ha' held a ship at anchor. Lord save us, I must ha' been a comical-looking object."

He condescended to smile as his mind reverted to the absurdity of the position in which he had been placed. Frank did not contradict him, and was about to renew his apologies when half-a-dozen Highlanders, who had discovered them, rushed up, and jabbering in Gaelic made them prisoners. They were about to strip them of their clothing, much to the baillie's indignation, for it seemed that clothes were much needed in the clachan of Aberfoil.

"Be quiet there, you daft loons," cried he. "We are a' frens of The Macgregor's, mair by token that I'm a kind of cousin German thirty times removed, but I ha' the Campbell bluid in my veins, and I demand to be brought instantly before your chieft. Ma conscience, I wish I had stayed at home. Where's Dougal? The creature kens me weel."

At the mention of Dougal's name the men paused and looked around. One gave a peculiar whistle, and presently the awkward form of the gillie was seen coming forward. He recognised his friends in an instant, and addressing a few words in Gaelic to his clansmen, they desisted from their efforts to rob the Sassenach, as had previously been their intention.

"This is sair wark, Dougal—sair work," said the bailie, "and I fear, you puir creature, that you will have to pay dearly for it."

Dougal merely replied that he had acted entirely under the orders of Mistress Macgregor, by whom the ambuscade was arranged. He added that he would have to at once convey them before her, and that he would explain their position as well as he could.

"She is nae that gentle body I could wish for the shentleman," continued Dougal. "But when the hawks are hunting her laird ye canna expect her to be ain o' the angels."

The bailie saw that it would be a waste of time to continue the conversation with Dougal, and bade him conduct them without any further delay to Helen Macgregor. Accordingly, they were marched without ceremony to that part of the glen where the martial wife of Rob Roy was standing talking to her followers, and giving them directions what to do, now that the field was won.

"She's a woman wi' a temper, Mister Osbaldistone," whispered the bailie. "I ha' heerd o' her before now, and mony a time she has hangit a mon up to a tree by a word o' her mouth."

"I hope she will not treat us in that way," replied Frank.

"It is impossible to say," the bailie answered, with a grave shake of the head. "She is a Macgregor, and Rob has been sair pressed by the whole countryside. I am his kinsman, an' I will make the most o' that. Besides, the Dougal creature will put in the guude word, and maybe, the cord won't gang round our thrapples this time though, ma conscience, sir, my mind misgie's me sairly."

Mr. Nicoll Jarvie did not speak in a way calculated to impress Frank very favourably with Rob Roy's wife, and his misgivings were increased rather than allayed. When they arrived before Helen Macgregor, she was standing with dishevelled hair, sword in hand, like some heroine of ancient history. Her hands and face were splashed with blood, indicating that she had taken an active part in the contest which had just been waged, but wild as was her aspect, her beauty was undeniable.

"Who have we here?" she asked of Dougal, as Frank and the bailie made their appearance.

"They will be frens of the red Macgregor," replied Dougal.

She smiled scornfully.

"I think I know my husband well enough," she replied, "to be sure that he would not choose such friends as these."

"We are mair than frens," the bailie hastened to say, for he saw a cloud gathering on her brow. "I has the honour, Mrs. Campbell, to be your kinsman—Nicoll Jarvie o' the Saut Market, and a magistrate to boot. This is Mr. Osbaldistone, who haes business wi' Robin in those parts to which we have penetrated wi' his assurance of safe conduct."

"How is it you are found with the soldiers who came to shed his blood?"

"We were arrested on suspicion and made to come alang. The Dougal creature kens what I say is true. I ha' done Robin guude service fu' mony a time, and I claim your kind consideration for my companion and myself."

Helen turned to Dougal and conversed with him in Gaelic, her remarks and his replies being unintelligible to either the bailie or Frank. Sometimes she made an impatient exclamation as if something that Dougal said did not please her, and she would look angrily at the captives. Again she addressed Mr. Jarvie, saying:

"Everyone's hand is against the Macgregors, and it is time that their hands should be raised in turn. We have broken well the lowland churls, and what would you say if I have you

bound neck and heel and thrown into the tarn below there."

She pointed to the lake. The perspiration broke out in big beads which stood on the bailie's forehead. Frank felt extremely uncomfortable, for it really seemed as if Helen Macgregor was in a ferocious mood, caused by the way in which her husband was being hunted, and would not spare anyone who had fallen into her power that day. In the crisis, Mr. Jarvie did not lose his presence of mind.

"You can do your ain pleasure," he said. "I have always heard of the hospitality of the Highlands. We are here as Robin's guests at his express request. It will be a bad story to tell—that Helen Macgregor killed his kinsman who had done her nae harm, and Mister Osbaldistone haes frens who will avenge his death."

"Ha! do you threaten me?"

"I speak truth, that is a'"

Helen was about to reply when the mournful strains of a pibroch were heard coming up the glen. It was not the sound of victorious music, but more resembled a dirge for the dead, and as she heard it she turned pale.

"What is that?" she cried.

There was no answer, but all her followers turned their eyes in the direction from whence the sound came. Two pipers, followed by half-a-dozen men, were seen advancing, and from their dejected appearance it was easy to see that something of an untoward nature had happened.

"Oh!" exclaimed Helen, clasping her hands wildly, "if anything has been done to The Macgregor, I call Heaven to witness that I will have such vengeance that shall strike terror into the hearts of men for ages yet to come."

It was noticed that the men who followed the pipers dragged between them a prisoner who, from excess of terror, could scarcely support himself. Who it was, or what had taken place, it was impossible to tell, until the party approached near enough to answer the questions which she was burning to put to them.

(To be Continued.)

#### SUPERSTITIONS.

THERE are men, ay, and women too, who still cling with the utmost tenacity and bulldheadedness to long exploded theories of the effects of the supernatural, and believe implicitly as they do in Heaven that mysterious causes control the affairs of life, despite all of education and enlightenment and the repeated sweeping away of these frail cobwebs of the brain.

It is a common belief that the moon exercises a marked control upon vegetable matter; that those growing above the ground must be sowed in the light, and those to mature beneath the soil in the dark of the "silver orb," when in fact the time of planting has no more to do with a successful yield than it has with the growth of rocks. Given a good soil, proper cultivation, freedom from weeds and plenty of food, and they will produce a bountiful return despite such foundationless superstitions, and the "old man" the children are wont to discover will laugh at the idea as the veriest moonshine.

With sailors such things are very common. A horse-shoe must be nailed to the heel of the foremast; a ship must never have its keel laid or be launched on Friday; the Sabbath is a lucky time for leaving port; killing a black cat on board will produce terrible storms, if not shipwrecks, a minister among the passengers is a bad omen, rats will leave a ship about to be lost; sharks will follow a ship if there is to be death on board, and so on through a thousand variations.

"Haunted" houses are so common as to be scarcely worth the mentioning. Every locality has at least one, and a village lacking this exquisite topic for hair-raising gossip is to be pitied. The old belief that the head must lie to the east, and the doors and windows opened

for the passage of the spirit (after leaving the body) is not altogether abolished, and the senseless superstition that no one can die upon feathers, certainly not if any of them are from wild birds, has its advocates.

Don't kill a toad! It will make the cows give blood milk, is asserted by those who should know better; and yet it puzzles the most profound philosophers to pronounce the "connecting link" between the batrachian (even though of the genus *brefo*) and the bovine. If the butter don't come easily, drop a red hot horseshoe into the churn, and sing "burn your nose, burn your nose," and some old witch's proboscis will suffer and your labour be made easy! Don't cut the nails of a young child, it will make a thief of it. Don't look at the new moon over your left shoulder, it is very unlucky.

To repeat even a hundredth part of the floating superstitions would fill an entire paper. Some people, ancient dames especially, have a "sign" for everything, or rather make of everything a "sign." Strange how the relics of witchcraft have endured the light of centuries; how education and science and religion have not been able to banish them; how such intangible things as ghosts and "spooks" and dreams influence the lives of those who are looked upon as sane; how age doats upon them and children are taught

Under the tree,  
When the fire outdoors burns merrily,  
There the witches are making tea,

and this we presume is the reason why women find their fortunes predicted by the grounds at the bottom of the cup.

It is high time such nonsense was banished, and for ever. They belong to unlettered ages, and should not be tolerated in the present. The mother who permits her child to hear such rubbish is not fit for her place, and the nurse who retails it ought to be sent to the pillory. We earnestly protest against it in these days of a higher civilisation; of freedom from the thrall of darkness that ever surrounds ignorance. Don't let your children's minds be stained by any such nonsense, and don't proclaim yourself an idiot by advocating it.

#### THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

PROFESSOR MUDGE has published some interesting evidence relating to the antiquity of man. He starts by assuming the correctness of the generally accepted opinion among geologists that man was on the earth at the close of the Glacial epoch, and endeavours to prove that the antiquity of the race cannot be taken at less than 200,000 years. After the Glacial epoch, American geologists have recognised, by their effects, three others—namely, the Champlain, the Terrace, and the Delta, all supposed to be of nearly equal length. His argument for estimating the duration of these epochs is as follows:

"He takes the case of the Delta of Mississippi, and notes the fact that for a distance of about 300 miles of this deposit there are to be observed buried forests of large trees, one over the other, with intersplices of sand. Ten distinct forest growths of this nature have been observed, which must have succeeded one another. These trees are the bald cypress of the Southern States. Some have been observed over 25 feet in diameter, and one contained 5,700 annual rings. In some instances these huge trees have grown over the stumps of others equally large, and such instances occur in all, or nearly all, the ten forest beds."

From these facts, Professor Mudge thinks it is not assuming too much to estimate the antiquity of each of these forest growths at 10,000 years, or 100,000 years for the ten forests. This estimate would not take into account the interval of time—which doubtless was very considerable—that elapsed between the ending of one forest and the beginning of another.

"Such evidence would be received in any

court of law as sound and satisfactory. We do not see how such proof is to be discarded when applied to the antiquity of our race. There is satisfactory evidence that man lived in the Champlain epoch. But the Terrace epoch, or the greater part of it, intervenes between the Champlain and Delta epochs, thus adding to my 100,000 years. If only as much time is given to both these epochs as to the Delta epoch, 200,000 years is the total result."

## SCIENCE.

### A YEAR'S PROGRESS.

DURING the past twelve months there have quietly happened not a few events which in times of slower progress, when great progress and great achievements were less a matter of daily occurrence, could scarcely have failed to make a grand stir in the world. There can be, indeed, no stronger proof of the exceptional character of the present time than our proneness to accept such things as matters of course. It is only when era-making events become common that they cease to be remarkable.

The regular readers of the LONDON READER do not need to be told at this late day what important, if not memorable, occurrences in the world of progress—commercial, industrial, and scientific—have characterised the past year. It may not be unprofitable to recall to mind some of the more significant of its events, some of the more notable movements of progress it has developed.

Of purely scientific events it is hard to say which of the many important ones stand out most prominently; and the work of discriminating is made all the harder by the circumstance that the achievements first made known this year have largely been, as usual, the final outcomes of long series of patient labours; while the larger part of the year's work of our scientific men, in the field and in the laboratory, remains unreported.

Three or four new metals have been discovered; but that sort of thing has ceased to excite general interest. While one class of chemists has been thus adding to the list of elements, another class has been working with no slight promise of success to show that several if not all of the elements are but variant forms of one matter stuff. Meantime, Mr. Crookes has been carrying forward his researches in connection with the ultra-gaseous state of matter, though apparently without making any discoveries of a radical character. Mr. Edison has made some valuable observations with regard to the behaviour of highly heated metals in vacuo, and has materially improved the means of converting power into electricity. His electro-chemical telephone has been rapidly developed and practically applied; the sonometer has grown out of his induction balance, and the micro-telephone has been the basis of not a few more or less useful instruments of physical or physiological investigation. Mr. Edison's call for platinum for his long promised electric lamp has resulted in the discovery of many deposits of the metal in the West and elsewhere.

We hear from Colorado reports of the discovery of the rare metal uranium in the Sacramento mining district. The ore is said to run 60 per cent.; but the probable quantity of ore in the deposit is not mentioned. The development of the mines of gold and silver in the West during the year has been very rapid. The expedition in search of the remains of Sir John Franklin have made valuable corrections in the map of the region north of Hudson's Bay. On the opposite side of the continent the Jeannette has made a bold and promising push into the unexplored regions within the Arctic circle north of Behring's Strait. The safe passage of Nordenstjöld through the Siberian seas is the most notable event in northern exploration. Prejvalski and other Russian explorers have been doing good work in high Asia. Major Pinto has crossed the African continent; and a large number of

exploring parties have pushed in various directions into the little known interior. The last report of importance mentions the discovery of the head springs of the Niger by a couple of Frenchmen.

In Australia, Forrest has made a bold and successful passage across regions hitherto unexplored, discovering vast tracts of farming and grazing lands where all was supposed to be desert.

In the field of engineering, a large number of important undertakings have been brought to successful issue, particularly in the construction of long and lofty railway bridges and great tunnels. Among the latter is the famous Sutro tunnel, and we are almost able to add the St. Gotthard, which is rapidly approaching completion. The great work of improvement in the harbour of Genoa has been largely advanced; and in America considerable good work has been done in the Hell Gate channel of New York harbour, and on the proposed tunnel under the Hudson. Several extensive ocean piers have been constructed at Long Branch and Coney Island. The mouth of the Mississippi has seen the practical completion of the opening of its channel to deep-draught shipping. A new Atlantic cable has been laid, and other works of the same character have been carried out in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere.

These are but a few of the topics of more than temporary interest which the readers of the LONDON READER will recall. To speak of the important projects proposed, discussed, or actually begun during the year—like the proposed ship railway across the Isthmus of Panama, for example—would swell this article beyond all reasonable limits. Besides, our readers do not need to be specially reminded of them. Enough appears at the hastiest glance to show that progressive men have not been asleep during the year, and that those who have cared to read about the world's real work have not lacked material for engaging their attention. —ED.]

### MILKING.

THE faster and more gentle a cow is milked, the greater will be the amount given. Slow milkers always gradually dry up a cow, and for the reason that if the milk be not drawn about as fast as it is given down, it will subsequently be withheld, and that withheld is, as a matter of course, what is known as the stripplings, in fact, the upper surface of the milk in the udder. Many milkers draw the milk with a strong downward pull, in fact, with a jerk. This should never be allowed; it irritates the cow, and often injures the bag. Fill the teat, and with a firm pressure of the last three fingers empty it, drawing slightly on the teat and udder at the same time; so proceed alternately with each hand until the milk supply is exhausted. Many milkers get the habit of slow milking because steady, firm, quick milking tires the fingers and wrists until by practice the muscles get used to the work. Until this use comes naturally, the individual should only milk such a number as he can without severe cramping of the hands; what are milked should be milked fast, increasing the number till there is no tiring whatever. Five minutes is about the limit that should be allowed for milking a cow. There is another thing well worthy of being remembered: cows should be milked as nearly at a given hour, morning and evening, as possible: undue distension of the udder is always injurious.

### THE FUTURE OF AFRICA.

WHAT the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have done for America the twentieth is likely to do for Africa. Civilisation is attacking her ancient fastnesses from all sides. Europe is especially alive to the enormous capacities of

the continent for trade. A score of more or less powerful missionary societies are bent upon the evangelisation of its swarming millions; and with the facilities for rapid progress furnished by steam and electricity the speedy conquest of the interior by Christianity and the arts of peace is all but assured. Unlike the Americas, when first discovered, Africa is well peopled by nations for the most part well advanced in civilisation, and ready to become important factors in the industrial and commercial world. They are far enough advanced to be large producers of many things that the industrial world has need of, and are equally well calculated to become large consumers of industrial products.

What with telegraphs along the coast, steamers and railways pushing inward along its ancient lines of traffic, the suppression of its external slave trade, the pluck and energy of scientific, missionary, and commercial explorers, and the great wealth of the national and international societies bent upon the early evangelising of the African peoples and the commercial development of the enormous natural capacity of the country, we may reasonably expect in the near future an awakening in Africa as marvellous as anything the world has yet witnessed. Dark as its present condition is, Africa is a land of splendid possibilities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that commerce is studying its newly opened regions with keen interest; or that the ecclesiastical world is showing the liveliest concern for the future of regions which promise to be the seats of great Christian nations.

### WINTER EVENINGS.

WELCOME are the long winter evenings to those who have pleasant homes, and who enjoy cheerful gaslight and gleaming fire in the company of a gay little home group. And, father, you will add to this gaiety? It is your duty as head of the household. Don't take your book or newspaper directly after supper—settle down into the warmest corner in a manner that warns everybody to keep still—read sulkily or selfishly until ten o'clock, and then yawningly ask your wife if it isn't "most time to go to bed?" Some fathers are about as useful, and not half so ornamental, as a good quality of parlour boarder.

There is a good bit of the evening left after the child's bed-time, if they go when they should. Help Tommy on his "home lesson," if the teacher has been permitted to put one upon him, or give an hour to games in which all hands can join. A little romp will help your digestion and spirits more than it can possibly hurt your dignity. Don't be afraid, good people, of a regular dose of fun in your home life. It is the best preventive going for restlessness, nervousness, stupidity, irritability, and all other ills that spoil home comfort. Social parties are also in order for the long evenings. The old style "swell parties" and "crush sociables" are giving way to quieter affairs. Invitations now often suggest real pleasure, instead of being a mere legal tender for the payment of social debts. Only so many are invited as can be cosily entertained, and they are selected with some idea of congeniality and the fitness of things. The head is remembered in the entertainment as well as the stomach, and sociality becomes a source of delight instead of a bore.

There are many ways in which the winter evenings may be made enjoyable; see that you regard them.

THE Sir Rowland Hill memorial fund amounts to £27,000.

LORD BEACONSFIELD has subscribed £100 to the Duchess of Marlborough's relief fund.

THE Queen has purchased the painting in oils executed by one of the students of the Female School of Art, for which the gold medal was awarded.

## THE FORCED MARRIAGE;

—OR—

### JEW AND GENTILE.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

RACHAEL had escaped Upton for the time, but he had tracked her to her retreat in the neighbouring hospital. He knew she lived there under an assumed name—another indisputable proof of her guilt. He knew that there she was working and striving by noble effort to requite herself for her suffering, lost youth; yet no compunctions of pity, none of humanity, none of justice, held him back from his purpose.

It was only because a safer and surer method of attaining his object presented itself that he stayed his hand and withheld the blow which would otherwise have fallen with such blighting force upon the unconscious head of innocence.

While these thoughts held possession of the mind of the arch-traitor at Ashurst, the days were passing happily and profitably at Theobald's Hospital.

As time went on it became more and more apparent to the attending physicians that Mr. Saunders's case was assuming a more hopeful phase. The profound melancholy which was deemed so alarming a symptom seemed yielding to the tender influence of the new nurse.

She did not limit her attentions to mere care for the sick man's wants, but would seek to influence his mind also, to divert him from his brooding thoughts, to give him new and fresh subjects for contemplation, and in this she so far succeeded as to secure those results which so gratified the resident physician.

Little by little sister Felicia beguiled her charge into conversation; she read to him, she amused him with cheerful anecdotes, and, at times, when his restlessness would not yield to these allurements, she would sing some soft ballad in her wonderfully sympathetic voice, and to this last effort the mood of the patient was never proof.

These kindly offices were not the portion of the sick man alone. The poor little lame boy thrived under her care, and soon it became evident that Sister Felicia's influence throughout the ward was a most beneficial one.

The occupants of the beds near her accustomed place, as well as those in a more remote part of the chamber, brightened when she approached. Her soothing voice, her gentle, encouraging manner, cheered many a sad heart, and many an eye was lighted with a smile as, leaving her own post, as was her occasional custom, she went to other bedsides with words of friendly, even sisterly, comfort.

Her reading, her singing, was eagerly listened to; there were none so weak as to become fatigued in hearing her, and there were none so indifferent as not to feel sorry when song or reading came to an end.

But there were times when the mood of the suffering Mr. Saunders perplexed her. There would be days when he would seem to avoid her ministrations, when he would turn his head at her approach and reply to her kind inquiries only in monosyllables; or pretending to be asleep when she addressed him, would be altogether silent.

At first Rachael attributed this singular conduct to invalid whims, and humoured them accordingly, but after a while she became conscious that there was some deeper influence underlying the apparent contrariety of his behaviour.

Though he might appear to be sleeping when she addressed him, she was aware the next moment that his eyes were fixed intently upon her as she turned to her other duties; and what was more singular than all else, the man seemed inclined to jealousy if she lingered long at other bedsides, and did not speedily return to her allotted post.

At other times too, she would encounter his gaze fastened upon her with such earnestness that she was almost startled, and again there were times when he seemed to be deeply communing with himself.

Rachael noticed that these self-communings were always followed by fits of melancholy, by mental depression so deep as to approach the most poignant remorse. The gentle nurse tried in vain to fathom the cause of this depression, but every attempt which she made was baffled by the invalid's reticence.

He never alluded to himself, or to his family, which Rachael scarcely marvelled at: since such recollections must have been fraught with agony too intense to be borne; and yet she sometimes thought that by conversing of his lost wife and child the fountain of feeling would be so unsealed that the mind would regain its accustomed tone.

Another thing Rachael noticed about this time: Mr. Saunders seemed to be watching and studying the physician with as much interest as the latter watched him, yet this was done so quietly, almost so surreptitiously, that the doctor was quite unaware that he was the object of such close inspection.

Only Rachael discovered this, and in her own mind there arose the thought that for some strange reason the man was purposely misleading the physician as to his condition, yet she wisely forebore mentioning this suspicion, not being altogether certain as to its truth.

All this time, also, there was a great change taking place in the gentle-nurse. Anyone who had seen Rachael Levy two years or eighteen months previously would never have imagined her the same being as this lovely young creature, this true sister of charity and of mercy, who moved about from one sick-bed to another, ministering so sweetly, so gently, yet such calm self-reliance and accurate judgment.

The Rachael Levy of old was timid, self-deprecating, undeveloped in mind and body, with eyes scarce ever lifted from the floor when in the presence of others, never speaking except when spoken to, and then only in monosyllables, answering not when harshly spoken to, silent alike under rebuke, injustice and oppression. Yet the Rachael of that later time was a vision of loveliness such as is rarely beheld under the most favourable auspices.

Graceful in form, of a faultlessly developed figure, erect bearing, with a mild, straightforward look in her lustrous, magnificent eyes, she was a budding Hebe in appearance, while in character, that most priceless art of individuality, she was in every respect most admirable. Gently, retiring still, yet mildly self-poised and steady in her apprehensions of right and wrong, siren-voiced, fresh and lovely, no one could see her without being conquered by her sweetness.

The costume which the rules of the hospital prescribed became the young nurse well. The snowy cap resting upon the dusky hair and lying against her rose-tinted cheek, gave her a dignity which her youth alone would not have accorded her.

The plain muslin kerchief of soft, unrustling material, made of such length as not to impede her movements, thereby unwittingly revealed the small neatly shod feet, the delicate hands, so soft and soothed in their ministrations, all combined to make her seem like an angel sent to bring health, rest, gladness to the afflicted ones of earth.

Even her own uncle, that recreant relative who had so shamelessly abandoned her to a dreadful destiny, would not have recognised the girl thus transformed by circumstances and those other influences which he had himself indirectly insured.

Had he met her now he would have looked upon her as upon a person with whom he had nothing in common, and thus he would have passed her by unnoticed, much less would her husband, the wild, reckless youth who so self-safely accepted the sacrifice of her untried life and who afterward received her with such indignity—much less would he have discovered in this perfect flower of humanity that silent,

downcast, ungraceful girl, whose timid yielding to her uncle's command made her his wife.

Indeed, no! for the husband could hardly be said ever to have seen his wife save once or twice when he was so beside himself with passion that objects or persons made little impression upon his mind.

At their marriage he touched the hand of his bride, but he scornfully averted his eyes from her face, believing he should only behold those repulsive features which he heartily despised. At their next meeting, when the money-lender brought her to Ashurst, she sat in so obscure a corner, she held her head so low, she was quite so insignificant a creature that he took no pains to study her countenance; he saw enough to fix his first dislike, and so the third time, upon that fatal occasion when the suicide's hand was raised against his own life, what wonder was it that to his transported sense, persons as well as things bore confused, intangible shapes?

Thus it may be doubted if even Edward Aveling could ever really have recognised his wife, and the poor girl herself knew that he went out of the world as perfect a stranger to her as though they had never met.

In her new home her thoughts often turned to those earlier days: but her life at Ashurst now seemed more like a dream than a reality. She would scarcely believe that she lived so many months shut up in those secluded apartments; it was only when Pluto came to her, as was often his wont, and laid his great head in her lap, looking up into her eyes, that she was carried back to those days when the animal's sympathy was the only tie which held her to her duty.

Then she could almost fancy herself again at Ashurst. She could almost hear the throb of that silence which oppressed her at times so terribly. She could almost see her old surroundings, and feel the indignation which often rose and swelled in her bosom as she thought of her undeserved imprisonment.

Many times, indeed almost daily, since she came to the hospital, she had taken long walks with Pluto, as before by her side. The dog's wounds, under Mrs. Markham's skilful nursing, healed rapidly. He took most naturally to the new home where his friends were also domiciled, and like them, he speedily won for himself a place in the regard of the hospital officials.

Once, when the dog and his mistress were taking their accustomed walk, they met Mark Upton coming toward them, mounted upon the chestnut thorough-bred which had once been the favourite horse of Edward Aveling.

Rachael, seeing her enemy approaching, would have turned and retraced her way, not caring to encounter what she knew would be a hostile gaze; but before she could execute her design she saw that she had been recognised. She therefore continued her way, feeling too proud to let him suppose she would avoid him through cowardice.

He slackened the speed of his horse when they drew near each other. He leaned forward in the saddle as if he would speak; but she, seeing the malicious smile upon his face, and anticipating an unpleasant rencontre, hastened instead of abating her speed, and with a civil bow, passed on.

Upton's face flushed as she thus declined holding any further conversation with him, and divining the scornful estimation in which she held him, he suddenly wheeled his horse around, spurred him across her path, and raising his riding-whip, glared at her with so savage an aspect as to almost make her quail beneath his furious gaze.

Fortunately, her brave heart did not fail her: she met his anger with steadiness. She stopped, as she was forced to do by reason of his placing his horse across her path, but she bore his scrutiny so undauntingly that his own glance fell.

"Madame," he said, after an angry pause, during which he seemed to be struggling to command his voice, "Madame, you left Ashurst, in triumph, you may fancy, since you openly, and, as it would seem, successfully, defied me.

but do you know that a day of reckoning is coming?"

"Will you permit me to continue my walk, Mr. Upton? It is useless for us to waste time discussing what has happened in the past or what may happen in the future."

"You shall soon change your mind as to that, madame!" was the angry response. "With all your calm assumption you doubtless fancy you are safe, but I can tell you that I, too, have a certain confidence, and the sooner you abandon legal proceedings the better."

"Legal proceedings?" echoed the astonished Rachael, betrayed by her surprise into a reply. "You are quite mistaken if you think that I have appealed to the law."

"Don't try any of your falsehoods upon me, ma'am!" retorted Upton. "I know the world well enough to know exactly what such a denial is worth. Your pretended humility is all very well: it will sound very fine, you think, to have it said that the rich Mrs. Aveling was driven from Ashurst by her husband's cousin, and to escape him she took a nurse's place in an hospital; but I tell you, ma'am, such a dodge won't serve your purpose. It was a very touching manoeuvre, no doubt, but I know a trick that is better still, and before you smile at your own shrewdness you'd better find out who will win!"

There flashed across Rachael's mind, at that moment, the droll thought that Mark Upton was better entitled to be thought demented than the sad-eyed, silent Mr. Saunders, whose forlorn condition and tragic story moved her to such pity. Upton's words seemed so incomprehensible, so erratic, that with a wave of her hand only did she reply. Her sign of dismissal was disregarded.

"Some of your stealthy, mischievous operations have already been discovered," he said, growing more and more excited as the interview progressed. "How long do you think it will be before you will again be visited by the old beldame who tapped at your window that stormy night?"

"As I have no interest in the poor creature of whom you speak, I care not if I never see her again," Rachael replied, calmly still, but with a fear in her heart lest this lonely interview might have a disastrous termination.

"No, madame," Upton again cried, "you cannot mislead me as you once did. Let me tell you that your midnight visitor has been discovered. I shall wrest your secret from her, and then we'll see who will be the victor!"

"You are welcome to the victory whatever it may be," replied Rachael. "I shall not enter the lists against you."

"Very prettily and very wisely said!" again retorted Upton. "It is very well to be generous to your adversary when you perceive you can gain nothing for yourself. You made a false step when you refused my offers as you did—a fatal step, as you will learn to your cost!"

Almost hissing the last words in her ear Upton again wheeled his horse towards Ashurst and putting the spurs to the high-spirited animal, was soon far distant from the terrified yet outwardly collected girl.

Some impulse prompted her to turn her head and look over her shoulder, as reaching a turn in the road, she would soon regain the confines of the hospital estate. Doing so she saw Upton had checked his horse on the brow of that hill which hid Ashurst from her view, and had also turned to take a parting look of her.

He waved his arm in a mocking salute, as he saw Rachael turn toward him. She did not wait for more than one quick glance, for by this time her self-possession began to desert her, and turning toward the house, she ran as rapidly as she could, until she found herself safe within its protecting portals.

That afternoon, when she returned to her duties in the convalescent ward, she was surprised and pleased to find Mr. Saunders sitting before the fire in a snug corner of the pleasant chamber.

Her unfortunate meeting with Upton had

strangely shaken her nerves, but seeing Saunders' bright smile of welcome as she entered, she felt consoled and strengthened, for unconsciously to herself, the sympathy of this man, whom she had won from insanity and death, was an ever increasing delight to her.

Looking toward the cot were the little lame boy lay quietly sleeping, and seeing that her services were not required in that direction, she sat down beside her old charge and said, pleasantly:

"I am very glad to see that the doctor has allowed you this liberty, Mr. Saunders. By this time you must have become very tired of your bed."

The convalescent turned his brown eyes, made preternaturally large by extreme emaciation, upon the bright young nurse, and replied:

"The fatigue was less than you may imagine, Sister Felicia. There was a time when it was a matter of entire indifference to me if I ever left it."

"That seems to me a very strange state of mind," she returned. "When the weather becomes so mild that you can taste the delightful out-door air, you will change your mind altogether. It is very hard to be imprisoned within the four walls of a sick-room."

The man sighed deeply. Rachael went on:

"In a few weeks you and I must venture out for short walks in the neighbourhood. The country hereabouts is delightful. I think I have never enjoyed anything more than the long walks I have lately taken."

"Is your home near here?" asked Saunders, looking into the sweet young face, some reflection of its brightness seeming to cheer his own sad, pale countenance.

"My home?" the nurse repeated, as sudden change coming over her. "Oh, no, this may be said to be the first and only home I have ever had, and it seems strange that it should be so," she said, brightening; "for there never lived a person who could love a home more devotedly than I. I often imagine myself picturing just such a home as I should enjoy. It would not be a fine mansion, where everything would seem too grand for use, but just an ample, comfort-giving cottage with music, books, pictures, flowers, and open fireplaces."

At that moment there thrilled through the convalescent's heart a wild desire to provide such a home for the beautiful young creature who would herself form the brightest and the sweetest feature of that ideal home, but the thought was instantly banished, for their came with it such a throb of pain and remorse that again that melancholy cloud settled upon his face.

Rachael looked before her into the glowing embers and thought wonderingly of the strange chances in life which seemed to bar her from the realisation of her dreams. She was aroused from her reverie by a querulous moan from the cot where the lame boy lay, and hastening to his side she devoted herself to soothing his pain and lulling him again into quietness.

While thus occupied the physician belonging to the ward entered the room and took the chair before the fire just vacated by Sister Felicia.

"It is a cold day," he said to his patient, Saunders, as he reached his hands out towards the fire. "I've been out visiting a patient a mile or two away, and my hands fairly sting with the biting cold."

"Yet Sister Felicia tells me I must soon accompany her in her walks. She too has been out."

"With such a companion I doubt if you'd feel the cold very much," replied the doctor. "In a few days it will do you good to go out. There are charming walks and drives hereabouts, especially the one in the direction of Ashurst."

Saunders made a quick movement, which, however, his companion did not observe.

"Ah," the latter continued, "Ashurst was a lovely place before the fire! Indeed, during the elder Mr. Aveling's life, I don't think a finer estate could have been found in the country;

but now everything is in danger of going to rack and ruin."

With an evident effort, Saunders asked:

"Fire? Has there been a fire in this neighbourhood lately?"

"Bless you! Yes, a terrible, a most disastrous fire. This house of Ashurst, of which I was just speaking, was burnt; but that's not the worst of it. Young Aveling, the proprietor, a wild sort of a fellow at one time, but later trying to amend his ways, was ill at the time, and by some fatal mischance was burned with the house."

Saunders again passed his hand across his forehead and an exclamation of dismay escaped him.

The physician went on:

"It was a terrible affair and made such a stir at the time that we couldn't keep it from our patients; but you heard nothing about it, as you had just been brought here and was too sick to notice anything."

"Has this estate—Ashurst, I think you called it—been abandoned since the fire?"

"Oh, by no means! The present proprietor is a cousin of the late Mrs. Aveling, a man with more enemies than friends, I fancy. He has stepped into his cousin's shoes with great shrewdness. He's getting up plans to rebuild the place—men are already at work clearing the ground, and if reports are true, Upton will shortly marry Aveling's widow."

"That is quick work, I must say," said Saunders, with a short laugh, the only one which had ever escaped him since he came to the hospital.

"So it is generally thought, but Upton isn't the sort of man to let the widow's portion of the estate escape him. They say, too, that the present Mrs. Aveling is a singular kind of a being; but no one seems to know much about her, for her husband, for some reason, kept her a sort of prisoner in certain out-of-the-way rooms."

"When is their marriage to take place?" asked Saunders, looking steadily into the fire.

"I don't know. I met Upton this afternoon taking his constitutional on his deceased cousin's favourite horse, and considering that a little neighbourly chat was necessary—though I own I never had any liking for the fellow—I congratulated him on his matrimonial prospects; but he glared at me in such a way as to make me see I had made a blunder of some sort; so I said it was a cold day and hurried home."

Rachael, who had lulled her little lame boy to sleep, had returned to the fireside some moments before, and so heard the doctor's account of affairs at Ashurst.

Her cheek paled at the mention of those familiar names; she glanced furtively from the doctor to his patient; but on neither countenance could she detect anything which associated their thoughts with herself.

By some strange chance, which perhaps is not uncommon in institutions, she had been received and retained entirely upon the strength of her own merits. Her history before coming to Theobald's had never been questioned, and thus it happened that though Upton knew whether she had gone, there was no one in the hospital except Mrs. Markham who suspected that the lovely young nurse and the secluded Mrs. Aveling were one and the same person.

(To be Continued.)

It is asserted that Mr. Gladstone has promised to write three yards and a quarter of preface to his Scotch speeches, which are to be published for the benefit of the sufferers from want of sleep.

The Empress of Austria proposes going to Ireland at the beginning of next month. She engaged Lord Longford's seat last year for the present hunting season at £1,000 per month. Moreover she expended £2,000 on improvements in the stabling and the arrangement of her own private apartments.



[HER HERO.]

LAURA;  
OR,  
THREE DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING.

"FORGIVE me for my seeming neglect, dearest Aunt Mary, but oh! time has sped by so rapidly that it scarcely seems as if I had had time for thought. Dear aunt, your little Laura is to be married—just to think, married!—in four weeks time. I remember writing from Portsmouth three months ago, whilst on a visit to cousin Fay, and telling you something of my new acquaintance, Mr. Massey.

"Well, after I came home he called on me. In a week he called again, and—well, ever since he has come as often as three times a week, and on Thursday last he proposed to me. It really seemed to be unreal. I love him so that I fear from my very excess of joy I cannot go on through life with so little doubt and trouble as has touched me thus far; and oh! if I thought that ever I should doubt his love, or the nobility of character with which I have endowed him, I should—. But never mind; I will allow no vague uneasiness to shadow my joy; I love him and he loves me. I am, he says, his first love, and he is thirty-eight years old; so am I not blessed?

"He is handsome, too—dark, regular-featured, and six feet high. He is very learned and talented; how could he choose such a know-

nothing as I am? But I shall love him so much that he will forget all my deficiencies in my love. How happy I am! I expect Miss Winters to arrive at any moment. Mother has invited her to visit us, and assist in selecting my trousseau. Philip is obliged to sail for America in five weeks, and as he wishes to take me with him, that accounts for these hasty preparations. But I can but write incoherencies, so I will say adieu. So far you and I have seen very little of each other, so I expect you to arrive a little before the wedding, so that you can meet my betrothed and become acquainted, and do lots of other things for

Your loving

"LAURA."

Laura White was the only child of a widowed mother. They were not rich, yet their income was a very comfortable one, and they belonged to the cream of a society which prided itself not on wealth, but upon ancient and stainless lineage. Laura was very pretty, with the daintiest of symmetrical forms, the colour of a blossoming peach on her rounded cheek, whilst her laughing eyes had stolen their light from the amber, and her hair partook of the same yellow-brown hue.

Yes, she was very happy as she folded her aunt's letter; the untried world was aglow with rose-colour, and she sported now with that airy toy, earthly happiness.

The White residence was erected on a slight eminence, and commanded a view of picturesque valley, river, and near towns, for many miles. The day was beautiful, one of those rare, early

summer days when the odorous air is calm enough for prayer, with but a winning breeze to ripple and dimple the limpid silver of the smiling waters, and rob clover and daisy fields, and cultured garden, of their tithes of perfume to waft as sweetest incense to the blue heavens.

Laura, with her smiling coral lips, dreamily gazed from her chamber window on nature's bounty spread out before her. Softly she breathed the glory of a thousand flowers, whilst her mind ran riot in pleasant reverie. Yes, she was very happy; she loved, and was beloved: and what more of bliss can earth bestow?

"Well, Laura, are you really to be married so soon?" was cried in sharp accents, and Laura, interrupted in her waking dreams, blushed slightly as she arose to greet the intruder on her privacy—a sallow-visaged damsel of decidedly uncertain age.

"Yes, Miss Winters," she replied, as she received the new-comer's butterfly salute on either soft cheek.

"Now tell me all about it, Laura sweet! I had not the smallest suspicion of such a thing when I received your mother's note this morning—and I, who have had such experience, too—three disappointments!" with a lugubrious sigh. "But tell me all about it."

"There is nothing to tell."

"Oh, yes, there is, you dear child. There are lots of little things—confidential, you know," with a smile that was probably meant to be seductive.

But it failed in its object, for Laura answered, rather coolly:

"Love is not a topic for discussion. Have you seen mother?" she ended, abruptly.

"No; I just waited to pack a few things in my time, took the next train this way, got to the station, took a tram down to the square, walked back to the house, rung the bell, smiled at that new servant of yours, rushed upstairs to you, and here I am! I was always impulsive; my second disappointment taught—"

"You must be hungry," interrupted Laura, gently. "Come, we will go to mother; then I will order luncheon for you."

"See here, Laura, I want to ask you something; how am I to greet your betrothed? Now, sweet, if he offers to kiss me, will I submit? Of course, I would for your sake, but I am so shy; my first disappointment used to say to me—"

But at this moment Mrs. White, a tall, pleasant-looking lady, advanced to greet the speaker, and Laura sped away, ostensibly to order a luncheon, but in reality to indulge in merry peals of laughter.

"The idea! The poor old thing! I wonder what Philip would do if she offered him her rosy lips? Oh, it is too funny!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"How do I look, Laura? Nice, eh?" And Miss Winters pirouetted before the pier-glass, now inspecting one or the other of her rouged cheeks, then turning her wonderfully arranged head (as to its hair) from side to side, now shooting glances on her own reflected face, again smiling pensively, or drawing her form up in queer attempt of stateliness, and sending proud looks into the mirror. "Dear me! Just fasten this rose in my hair, Laura! you can have the glass when I get through; I do so like a long mirror! I intend to make a good impression on Mr. Massey. Ah! Laura, how would you like it if I supplanted you? He! he! But I would not do such a thing; oh,"—with a sentimental sigh and a sad simper at the reflection—"my disappointed life! How much is Mr. Massey worth?" descending from sentiment to reality with but a shade of pause.

"I do not know."

"Don't know?" Miss Winters cast a wondering glance on her companion, then a slightly pitying one for the girl who did not know that as her first knowledge of her "intended," but with an uprising of the brows as her visible expression, she returned to the

interrupted view of herself. "What is his complexion, little one?"

"I ask," was the laconic reply.

"Now when I marry, he will be light—"

"Beggars can't be choosers!" was screamed almost in her ear.

She cast an evil look on the saucy parrot, who was perched near by; had he been at all timid, he would have been annihilated on the spot. "Ha! ha!" he hoarsely chuckled, as she continued to glare upon him. Finally, seeing that her glance was not a success as to intimidation, she turned to observe Laura; but being satisfied that that young lady had not noted the scene, she turned a pensive glance on the mirror.

"That simlax you are using recalls to me my bellehood days. Of course I see now the folly of such things, and sue not for the adoration of the multitude; but O for one loving heart—one sweet, congenial spirit! Oh—is Mr. Massey said to be wealthy, Laura?"

Laura could not resist smiling as she answered:

"He is said to be rich."

"Well, I rather think I would know positively before any man married me!" with a nod of determination for the benefit of the reflection.

"You'll do! You'll do!" cried the parrot, then screamed and shrieked to such a degree that Miss Winters was fain to cover her ears.

"Why do you keep such a nuisance?" she asked, as soon as she could be heard.

"He is always kept downstairs, but the cook has taken much trouble to teach him slang, so mother intends to keep him upstairs for awhile, until he forgets it."

"Ah! how the ghostly hand of memory turns the life pages of—"

"A many years ago! A many years ago! Ca! ca! ca!"

But before Master Parrot could quite finish his popular air his antagonist had rushed on him with the towel which she viciously whisked about, while he flapped his wings, uttered shrieks of defiance, and tried to fly at her. But here Laura took a hand in the fray, and carrying the bird to the door, thrust him out.

"He travels all about the house; he can go downstairs for to-night."

"The imp! I would wring his neck if I could!" said Miss Winters. Setting her frizzles and voluminous draperies anew, she signified her readiness to go downstairs. "How many people are there to be here to-night?"

"Only fifteen."

"Anybody I'll like?"

"Probably," laughing a little; "there are four unmarried gentlemen beside Mr. Massey."

"Are they a good age?" opening the door to depart. "You know I like men about fifty, because—"

"I'm not very young! Ca! ca! ca! ca! sang the enemy, as he waddled into the room.

Miss Winters attempted to impede his progress with her foot, but with a derisive cackle he flew to his perch, then rested himself composedly to return her stare with interest; but with a spiteful smile she left the room while he screamed his favourite expression:

"You'll do! You'll do!"

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour later, a gentleman of distinguished appearance entered Mrs. White's spacious and brilliant parlours. He bowed over the hand the hostess extended, then turned, with a glance of admiration shadowed in his dark eyes, to the slight, white-robed figure almost concealed by the mother's ample form.

Laura was dressed in misty, delicate muslin; a single white bud nestled happily in the glorious, amber-tinted hair; and she stood, in her simplicity, of all maidens to him the most divinely fair. She dropped her shy, beautiful orbs before his ardent gaze, and as he pressed the soft hand, whispering, "Come out on the terrace by-and-bye," a blush like a wild pink rose spread over her cheek, and without raising her eyes she bowed her head.

"Oh, Laura, come—come into the reception-room. I wish to speak to you in private."

Excusing herself to the party with whom she had been conversing, Laura somewhat wonderingly followed at a respectful distance Miss Winters' immense train, and smiled a little over the repressed excitement she had noted in that lady's manner. Once in the small reception-room, Miss Winters, with a glance around, and a glance of silence and mystery as she closed the door which would have delighted the audience of a pantomimic farce, turned to Laura and gazed upon her with a very solemn expression of countenance.

"Laura, dear, I am very sorry for you!"

"For me?" with great surprise.

"You believe in my soul-felt sympathy?"

"What for, Miss Winters?" queried Laura. She was well used to the other's queer mysteries, and odd freaks of fancied wrongs, or fancied love-making received, and which she would solemnly consult her friends upon, who only pitied the vanity that could not see that she had long passed the era of attractiveness; but, as there was not the least danger of her outshining them, they humoured her foibles, and laughed a little over her failings among themselves.

"Sweet, how can I disturb the harmony of spirit—oh!" and Miss Winters clasped her thin hands and appealed with tragic rolling of the eyes to each corner of the ceiling. "Oh, can I be the heartless woman who will pierce her trusting heart—oh, can I be?" appealing to the farthest corner of the room.

"Please tell me what you mean?" demanded the young lady, a trifle impatiently.

"Ah, sorrowful is my heart, but duty bids me tell you. Must I obey her mandate?" She distorted her eyes again so appealingly to each corner of the ceiling that Laura seated herself in an easy chair, and languidly wondered if her companion would not sometime lose all control over the motion of the eyes, from their strange habit of speculation. "Yes, child—duty bids me, and I am but her minion." Throwing the arms forward, and pushing one foot out so as to assume a striking attitude, she cried, "Come, rest your deceived head on this strong bosom, for—Mr. Massey is an impostor!"

Shrieking the last words, she dropped her arms to her side and stood the picture of dejection, with bowed head; she finally raised it slightly to shoot a glance at Laura, who sat very quietly, albeit she had grown pale suddenly, as though waiting for more words from her friendly informant.

"Please explain your meaning," she said at last, with a calm look into her friend's eyes, which sank beneath her own, though not before she thought she detected a malicious gleam in their greenish depths.

"Now listen, sweet. You know all about my third disappointment; how I was all ready—all ready, mind, worse off than you are, and was anxiously awaiting my wedding-day when we heard strange rumours of my intended's doings. You know that was long before I met your mother, and when we resided in London, and previous to my father's death. My father investigated these rumours, and the next time my gentleman called he showed him the door. He never attempted to see me again, although I would have seen him; but father took me away for several months."

"But what has this to do with me?"

"Everything, sweet. It is odd that you are to suffer exactly as I did, isn't it?"

"But tell me—"

"Oh, yes. Well, the rumour, which was true, was that my gentleman was to marry another lady—was on the very eve of marriage with her—whilst he was cheating me. This lady was willed a great deal of money, but by some flaw in the will she lost it all. On my return with father to London we heard this, and also that my gentleman had deserted her as soon as she had lost her fortune. I forgot her name—never heard it, perhaps, to forget. Father always said that he came after me because we were rich then—just so that he could have some one to fall back on if he lost the other heiress—but of course that was a mistake. He wanted

me, but the other woman was very designing, and held on to him. However, I am very glad she did not get him—very glad; he wanted to marry me, of course, and desert the—"

"But his name?" asked Laura, with interest.

"Oh!" walking towards the mantel glass, and assuming again a tragic attitude—"oh, ye powers! his name then was Philip Judson; now it is—Philip Massey. There!" And she stood with the air of one who has made an astounding revelation, and expects to bestow a magnanimous sort of consolation afterwards. So she commenced with entreaty in her tones:

"Sweetest child, look up; we all—"

But, to her surprise, Laura looked at her without reproach, and though she looked a trifle pale, she said, with a smile:

"I knew already that my betrothed was once named Judson. His mother married a second time. They had no children, and as the step-father was rich, he desired Philip to assume his name. This he did, so Massey is legally his cognomen, acquired by the necessary formalities."

A feeling of disappointment pervaded the being of Miss Winters at not succeeding in causing estrangement between the engaged couple. Not that Miss Winters was thoroughly bad-hearted, and would love the sorrows of a creature-woman, but simply that she liked to occasion misery and then see herself in the role of sympathiser and consoler.

She would not if she could adjust these sorrows, but she would weep with the sorrowful one, and really would commiserate her; and yet she would not have it otherwise. Explain the incongruity as a mixture of much bad and a mere trifle of good.

"By the way, Philip must have been very young when you knew him," said Laura, as though meditating aloud.

"Yes, rather," answered the other lady. Laura smiled. From her knowledge of Miss Winters' always fallacious hopes in regard to marriage, she was quite sure that Philip had never proposed to marry her.

"Come," she said, aloud, "we will return to the parlour."

Some minutes later, Miss Winters was being urged to delight the company with a song, and was listening with pleased simpers to their entreaties. On entering the room Laura had noticed her lover stepping from the long easement out on to the dark terrace, and thither, after a minute, she followed him.

"My darling!" he murmured, tenderly, as he raised her hand to his lips.

"Philip," she said, presently, when they stood at the far end of the terrace, and in the shadow cast by the nodding woodbine on the moonlit boards, "Philip, did you not tell me that I was the only woman you had ever loved—the only one you ever had hoped to marry?"

"Mine own, my darling, you are my first and only love."

"Hush, Philip dear! You tell me you never loved a woman before me. I would fain believe in you. Wait—not through any foolish, romantic fancy of being the first love, but because I wish to trust your lightest word; but to-night a doubt obtrudes itself, for I heard something I—"

The sweet voice quivered and broke indistinctly, and the hand he held trembled in his grasp.

"Tell me, love, what is that something?" his tone low, gentle and pleading.

"I heard—did not my mother introduce you to Miss Winters?" she inquired, rather irrelevantly.

"Yes, and I recognised her as an old acquaintance," he responded, mentally resolving to "take the bull by the horns," having a strong suspicion of what was next coming.

"Philip, dear, I hate to ask you or to speak of it, and I will not care for what Miss Winters told me, but this I must express. "Oh!" she uttered, in her passionate young voice, "why would you deceive me? I love you—I love you as my life! I care not for your past, for I cannot believe that it has been devoid of principle;

but, at the same time, do not deceive me in regard to it! I cannot endure deception; if you wish, say nothing that will give me false ideas of your past, for should I awake to the knowledge that you, saying you loved me, could deceive me, I—should want to die! If you wish, speak of but now and the future—you love me now, and I know will ever, and I am happy. I want to believe you beyond all small weaknesses, my love, my Philip!"

The night was calm and still. The moon's sweet smile softly rested on the vista of hill and river with a magic spell of beauty, whilst stars, set afar in their proud throne, looked down on love, and whispered, "Thus do we shower our pure light upon bright love," and winked at the amorous wind as it caressed each trembling blossom and flower.

"What a little moralist!" he said, after a moment of silence; and stooping, he kissed the rosebud mouth. "Dear child, I would not deceive you. Of course, like all men, I have trifled with love, and never felt it; I—"

"Philip, do not talk so. Love is not to be trifled with. Do not tell me that you, that you—"

"No, no, love. I must be more careful of light speech whilst with you; but I wish to tell you all I know of Miss Winters. Years ago—I was twenty, I think—I met her. She danced well, and was quite a showy girl in those days. I was easily impressed by those things, and became her escort to several parties, and, owing to her many invitations, a visitor at her house. After a time I heard that Miss Winters, who was many years my senior, expected to marry me; indeed, report said the wedding paraphernalia was prepared. I did not go to see her for a time, but I received so many gushing notes from my fair friend that one night I determined to go in person and have a perfect understanding with her as regarded my few past attentions. I was met on my entrance to the Winters' mansion by her father, who, with very stately mien, escorted me to the door, and, in a grandiloquent way, indicated that I should go. I did so. I never asked for an explanation, nor did I doubt but that some of my strong denunciations of the alleged alliance had reached his ears, hence his enraged demeanour. The thing amused me very much."

"But she told me of someone else—a lady who—lost her fortune," said Laura, in low, hesitating accents, for she was sensitive to an extreme degree, and only for her strong desire to restore all her belief in her lover's honour, would never have said the least word that could hurt the feelings of another.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, sharply; then under his breath he muttered, "That villainous old hag!" which would show that Mr. Massey's thoughts were not as gentle as his words.

When next he spoke his voice was tremulously low, and fraught with feeling.

"My darling, promise me that you will no more listen—that is, with belief—to a word that woman may utter. You love me, and will believe that she tells you false. Dearest love, like unto the wanderer in the arid desert was my heart thirsting for the soothing waters of love before I met you; but now I love you as my soul! Each day, each meeting, tells me that you are the life of my life, the soul of my soul, the worship of my being! Are you not content, beloved?" And he drew the bright head to his breast.

"Content!" she murmured, "oh, more than that!"

He heard not the words, but he saw by the light of the moon the enraptured expression of the angelic face, and with tenderness he pressed his lips to the lily forehead and led her into the lighted parlour.

\* \* \* \* \*

The gilded haziness of late June spread its halo over the scene. Every leaf tremblingly bent before the gentle, wooing zephyrs, and every breath of tender grass sighed waveringly with its very weight of happiness in unison with the carolling birds whose burden of song was, as ever, "life and love."

Two ladies slowly paced to and fro on the paved walk between the flower-bordered edges of Mrs. White's sloping lawn. It was early day, and the dew yet glittered on the fringing rows of rosemary, and sent their fragrance to greet the senses of that fairer blossom—Laura. She was fond of robing herself in delicate materials well suited to her gentle beauty.

This morning her loosely-fitting robe of muslin was softly tinted; even the dainty slippers were of the same pure tint, with a ribbon of deeper blue encompassing her slender waist, and her bright hair in a simple Grecian knot, fastened by a turquoise arrow, and outlining the perfect features of the oval face. Her companion was a lady seemingly thirty-five years of age, for her face was almost youthful, though her hair was as white as the hawthorn bloom.

"Just one week to your wedding-day, my child. Just one week, and you twain will be as one. Ah, child, marriage is a very solemn thing! But you are not like most girls; you will enter on the sacrament with all pure and dutiful intentions; for you are good, Laura, and few men are worthy of your trusting love. But I have trusted your innate antagonistic power against evil, and know your choice must be worthy of your love. I had little time to converse with you yesterday. Miss Winters would insist on helping me to unpack; she may be kind, though I find her officious, and I could not like her."

"Oh, she is very harmless, aunty," responded Laura, with a ringing laugh, whose silver accents the birds snatched up and repeated, "Joy, joy, is in the morning!"

"When am I to meet your Philip?"

"This afternoon, if you wish," bending the blushing face to a frail fuchsia. "He comes every day."

"Tell me, dear, all about him; everything interests me, who love you," said Aunt Mary, with a caressing touch of her fingers on the girl's glittering, sunlit hair.

And Laura, amidst the soft, wooing songs of summer, told in her own simple, innocent fashion all that she could put into speech of her love. Ah! there was much feeling that language, with all its beauty of expression, could but ill-depict.

"You love much, my child. Oh, may Heaven bless your union, and always leave you the privilege of love!" And the lady raised her eyes in appeal to the deep blue skies.

"Aunty, there is something I must confide to you—you, who were ever my confidant. There is something I want to tell you, and yet do not know that I should."

"Does any other know this thing beside yourself, Laura?"

"Yes, two."

"Ah! then it cannot, if it will ease your mind any, be wrong to tell me, who will advise and assist you all I can."

"Aunty, you saw Miss Winters?" stooping to pick a mess rose.

"Yes, dear, of course I did."

"Well," essaying with much attentiveness to pluck the thorns from the rose stem, "could you imagine my Philip ever making love to her?"

The first merry laugh Laura had ever heard from her aunt's lips disturbed the air, while she answered, with a manner unlike her usual sedateness:

"My dear, Miss Winters could have married at twenty-five and still be your mother; beside, her attractions even with youth could have been but few. Dear, why did you ask such an absurd thing?"

"Because," answered Laura, with her eyes still surveying the flower, "because she told me he was about to marry her. Had I believed it I should have been unhappy; but I told him of her tale, and he told me all about it. Miss Winters, I feared, might report the story of her 'third disappointment' to you, so I thought it better to tell you. Philip was much younger than she, but he met her in society, paid her some attentions which she interpreted to mean marriage, and she says was all prepared for the ceremony when her father heard things which made him debar her from the deceiver's society.

I told Philip, and he laughed over his acquaintance with her, and said the story of his being about to marry another at the same time was false. He says he never loved or thought of marriage before he met her. He was only twenty then, and after his mother's second marriage the family went abroad, where Philip resided until within two years. Did I tell you his own father's name was the same as his, Philip Judson, but—"

"Good heavens! Philip Judson?"

Hoarse was the voice that uttered the ejaculation, and Laura, stretching out her arms, caught the light form of her aunt as she swayed as if about to fall, and held her steady for a moment. Her face wore an ashy hue as she opened her eyes, which had closed, as though by shutting out the light she could sooner recover her startled senses.

Her lips, pale and bloodless, tried to murmur something, but it died away in indistinctness. Laura, too, was pale, and this the woman saw as after a time she moved from the supporting arms, and said, in a low, slow voice, "Come, dear," and walked slowly toward the house steps.

The flowers were just as lovely as they had been an hour before, and the birds sang just as blithely; but there was a felt change; the sunny air seemed tinged with phantom joys, and the red, red rose, clinging about the porch, told of fleeting pleasure, and ascending they stood in the transient shadow cast by the vines, and looked back and saw all the glory of serene morn and lovely calm.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

## FACETIA.

### HINTS FOR HOME COMFORT.

EAT very slowly, that you may keep everybody waiting.

2. Between husband and wife little attentions beget long bills.

3. As a man endows his wife with all his worldly goods, why should he not also give her a bit of his temper?

4. In cold weather a leg of mutton improves through being hung up for five weeks, but in no weather does a cold leg of mutton improve through hanging about for five days.

5. One petticoat will wear almost as long as two, if you tear the skirt and let the frayed ends trail behind.

6. If you wish to have dry salt at table do not keep it in damp cellars.

7. Always take credit for your furniture. In that case, when you retire to rest, you will feel that you are going upon double tick.

8. There is no real economy in purchasing a four-and-ninelpenny when you are going to make an offer to a millionaire's daughter.

9. When the decanter is circulating, change its position frequently, in order to equally distribute its juices.

10. It is questionable whether the oft-given precept, "overlook your linen," can pass muster. It is a shiftless mode of management that brings a man to go without his shirt.

11. No article of dress is more injured by moisture than widow's weed. Therefore, young widows, at any rate, will take care not to weep too plentifully.

### THE FROST IN FUTURO.

THE scientific journals state that the present winter is more severe than the last, and presage a cycle of years colder and colder. Thus we may anticipate for 1880:

MANCHESTER.—A frightful calamity has overwhelmed this town. The intense chill solidified the steam and smoke, whose weight brought down the chimneys. The many climbers encumber the thoroughfares.

EPPING FOREST.—A boy has wounded himself in a singular manner by having run into a load of shot frozen in mid-air between a sparrow-potter and the birds.

WINDSOR.—Herr Stick von Umbrella received knighthood this day as inventor of the hot-air handled parapluie, the beneficent saver of so many else frost-bitten fingers this season.

DUBLIN.—The LL whiskey obelisk has been found embedded in the ground; so much snow accumulated on its point that it sank eighty feet in one night.

MILAN.—The fire brigade have succeeded in thawing out Madame Nilsson, who was concealed under the willow whilst playing Ophelia afloat; several bars of the aria remain in her thorax, but applications of superheated flatirons reduce them a minim a minute.

KAMCHATKA.—The Arctic expedition has arrested a native with a copy of "Funny Folks' Annual," with which he is suspected of having caused the present frigidity by diverting the Gulf stream.

—Funny Folks.

#### GREAT SALE BY AUCTION.

The wonderful and unique invention known as the

"Scientific Rectification of Frontier" will be shortly offered to public competition, the inventor having

No further use for it.

The invention is admirably adapted for the use of statesmen who wish to

Throw dust in the eyes

of a simple-minded and gullible public. No expense has been spared to bring it to perfection, and the inventor will be happy to show several most glowing eulogiums pronounced upon it by the press. Cards to view may be obtained of the inventor, Downing Street and Hugden- den, Bucks.

CAUTION.—Probable purchasers are warned against unscrupulous statements throwing doubts upon the genuineness of the invention. Such statements are base calumnies, and emanate from malicious persons.

—Funny Folks.

THE CIMABUE BROWNS. ("TEAIN UP A CHILD," ETC.)

ANTIQUATED GRANDPAPA (fresh from Ceylon): "Now, my darlings, we're going to make a regular day of it. First we'll go to the Zoo. Then we'll have a jolly good blow-out at the Langham Hotel. And then we'll go and see the pantomime at Drury Lane."

MASTER CIMABUE: "Thanks awfully, grandpa! But we prefer the National Gallery to the Zoological Gardens!"

MISS MONNA GIVONDA: "Yes, Grandpapa! and we would soonah hear Handel's Judas Maccabæus, or Sebastian Bach's glorious 'Passions-musik,' than any pantomime, thank you."

—Punch.

#### NOBLESE OBLIGE.

FOOTMAN: "You've found a—what?"

OLD LADY: "A shillin'. Did your missus drop it?"

FOOTMAN: "The idea! We don't drop shillin's, mum. When we lose money, we lose gold!"

—Funny Folks.

#### THE PROBABILITY OF MARRYING IN A YEAR.

THERE is a discussion going on in a contemporary on the probabilities of bachelors marrying within a year. The topic is one of so much interest that we understand the office of the paper has been besieged by ladies eager to obtain copies. Not that they are curious, only they would like to know. Unfortunately, the principal authority is Mr. T. B. Sprague, whose orthography is so peculiar that one is rather doubtful about accepting the figures of a gentleman who apparently doesn't know how to spell.

What he tells is this:

"On circumstances supposed the ar 10,000 possible cases, ov which 741 ar favorable to the event and 9,259 unfavorable; therefore the probability ov the event happening is .0731; and the probability ov its not happening is .9259—in other words, .0741 is the probability that any one ov the bachelors (assuming them to be al similarly circumstanst) will marry within a year, and .9259 is the probability that he will not."

This is interesting, so far as it goes, but we

should like to have the views of Mr. Sprague (by the way, that may be only his way of spelling Spriggins, or any other name) on the disturbing influence of Leap Year. Surely that will bring up the .0741 or the 741, without the 0, which seems the same thing, in a surprising degree. Your views, Mr. S., if you please, on the probabilitiess of marriag in Leap yr.

—Funny Folks.

#### A LAMENT.

An old dog lingered on the road,  
Dejected at his lot and weary;  
He gazed upon each snug abode,  
To inmates looking fresh and cheery,  
And wonder'd who when others had  
A home to give them ease and shelter,  
He'd none, and said, "It is too bad."  
When down the raindrops came a pelt.

So with a sigh he trudged along  
The road besmeared by mud, not fleetly,  
Nor heeded he the wild bird's song  
Resounding in the air so sweetly,  
Until met by a little child,  
Who said, "Poor chap, you're faring badly;  
You hungry look, half-starved and wild,  
In fact, you have been used most sadly."

So giving him some bread and butter,  
Saved from her noon tide meal at school.  
He soon began his thanks to mutter,  
For truth with him had been the rule,  
And said, "I'll tell you, little maiden,  
Why I am homeless, straying ever  
With heart bow'd down and heavy laden.  
Here's for the secret now or never:

"I once had a good friend and home,  
Though he, like me, was poor and lowly,  
I never should have wished to roam,  
All things were bright and care-free  
slowly,  
Until they put on me a tax,  
And I with tears was cast adrift.  
Since then on me all turn their backs  
And dinnerless I've had to shift.

"I roam about a homeless waif,  
A curse on me and all my kind,  
And from life's ills I'm never safe;  
I have no friend the cash to find.  
To pay this hateful tax, the cause  
Of all my woes and all my grief,  
The law man made without a pause  
Will hunt me ever like a thief. O. P.

#### STATISTICS.

MORTALITY IN FOREIGN CITIES.—The annual rate of mortality, according to recent weekly returns, in Calcutta was 26, Bombay 31, Madras 38, Paris 28, Geneva 19, Brussels 31, Amsterdam 25, Rotterdam 20, The Hague, 23, Copenhagen 35, Stockholm, 20, Christiania 21, St. Petersburg 31, Berlin 23, Hamburg 26, Dresden 19, Breslau 25, Munich 33, Vienna 27, Budapest 27, Rome 33, Turin 27, Alexandria 32, New York 24, Brooklyn 20, Philadelphia 15, and Baltimore 16. Small-pox caused 28 and typhoid fever 28 deaths in Paris.

GUSTAVE DORE is at present engaged in illustrating Shakespeare.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

VEAL FROM DINNER.—Cut in small thin slices, peel and chop two medium-sized onions, fry in a small piece of butter to a light brown, and add a dessertspoonful of flour, then the gravy, if there was any left from dinner, add the meat to this gravy, and just heat through. Serve immediately.

RICE WAFFLES.—One gill of rice, three gills of flour, one ounce of butter, three eggs, a little salt. Boil the rice until tender, add the butter, flour, salt, and yolks of the eggs (previously beaten light) after which the mixture must be beaten very hard. Have the whites of the eggs very light, stir in gently, then ready for baking. Butter, serve on heated plates.

Eggs for INVALIDS.—Beat an egg until very light; add seasoning to the taste, then steam until thoroughly warmed through, but not hardened—this will take about two minutes. An egg prepared in this way will not distress even very sensitive stomachs.

MINCED VEAL AND EGGS.—Take some remnants of roast or braised veal, trim off all browned parts, and mince it very finely; fry a shallot, or onion, chopped small, in plenty of butter; when it is a light straw colour add a large pinch of flour and a little stock, then the minced meat, with chopped parsley, pepper, salt, and nutmeg to taste; mix well, add more stock if necessary, and let the mince gradually get hot by the side of the fire; lastly, add a few drops of lemon juice. Serve with snippets of bread fried in butter and the poached egg on the top.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

A REPORT is current in Paris that the granddaughter of Her Majesty, the Princess Victoria Elizabeth of Hesse Darmstadt, is betrothed to the Prince of Orange.

SOME new note paper has little landscapes painted in water colour in the upper left hand corner, and is altogether too pretty to use for anything but love letters. New envelopes for correspondence cards have the days of the week printed in gold on a dark ground with the initial letter in gold on a light ground. The gold will soon be so massive that it will be cut off for financial operations.

"*There is nothing*," said little Mr. Borkingdale, on entering his club and jumping at the top hook in the hat-rack with his new silk hat, "there is nothing," he panted with another desperate jump—"succeeds"—and up he went again—"like"—and he made a jump that a kangaroo might have envied—"like"—he shouted, as he slapped his hat fairly over the hook, hung on to the brim just a second too long, tore it clean off, pulled the hook through the side of his hat, and then as the whole hat-rack came over on top of him and he thrust his head through the mirror in the middle of it, he roared in desperate and legitimate conclusion—"suc-cess!"

SYNALEPHIA is the cutting off a vowel at the end of a word before another at the beginning of a word; as "Ishaway we have in th' army." Eethlipisia is the cutting off the letter "m" before another word; as "We won't go ho' till morning." Orasis is the contraction of two syllables into one; as "T'll d'light deah 'pear." Diresis is the resolving one syllable into two; as "F' he sha jolly good' s' fellow."

THE Pekin "Gazette" is nearly 500 years old, and every now and then an old man hobbies into the office and pays a year's subscription, with the remark that he has been a subscriber ever since the first number was printed. The clerk, without betraying any surprise, observes, as he hands him the receipt, "Yes, we have several names on our list who have been subscribers from the start." Then the old man goes out muttering something about the world being full of liars.

## CONTENTS.

Page.	Page
AILERN'S LOVE STORY	299
TIGHT BOOTS	292
TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE	293
THE BRIDAL WINE CUP	296
LINKED LOVES	297
ROB ROY MACGREGOR; OR, THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN	301
SUPERSTITIONS	304
SCIENCE	305
MILKING	305
THE FORCED MAR- RIAGE; OR, JEW AND GENTILE	306
LAURA; OR, THREE DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING	308
FACETIES	310
STATISTICS	311
GENES	311
MISCELLANEOUS	311
AILERN'S LOVE STORY commenced in	371
CORRESPONDENCE	312
—	—
NO.	—
THE FORCED MAR- RIAGE; OR, JEW AND GENTILE, commenced in	382
LINKED LOVES com- menced in	383
TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE commenced in	384
ROB ROY MACGREGOR; OR, THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN, com- menced in	388
AILERN'S LOVE STORY commenced in	381

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

P. F.—Serial declined with thanks. Our requirements are fully met for some months to come.

CHARLES S.—The majority of such persons are veritable quacks, who prey upon the unwary. Go to a respectable local doctor; it will be best and cheapest in the end.

W. E.—The best way is to treat the individual with contempt; but should the young lady's prospects be affected by the slander she could summon him before a magistrate, and the slanderer would be punished.

GEORE D.—1. We regret to inform you that at the present time in London there is no "good opening" for the remunerative practice of your presumed abilities as an artist. 2. Handwriting good.

A GREAT SUFFERER.—We could give you several "remedies" but they would not be harmless, and in time destroy your complexion altogether. Your safest course is to apply moderately violet powder or ground rice starch.

JAMES.—We answer all letters serially, save those which contain downright absurd and frivolous questions, such as, "Which is the best way to stroke a cat's back?" &c. &c. The multiplicity of letters and the fact of our enormous circulation necessitating our going to press some days prior to publication accounts for the slight delay you refer to.

J. A. D.—We do not publish the private addresses of editors or other gentlemen; but if you superscribe your envelope "The Editor of the 'Matrimonial News,' 303, Strand, W.C." it will reach him.

EMMIE.—Whether the young gentleman's attentions to you meant anything honourable and serious is open to doubt. Acquaintances made in the public streets we look upon with much disfavour. But the coolness which you say you evinced towards the young man having eventuated in the withdrawal of his attentions, we do not see how you can consistently pursue the matter any further.

UNHAPPY LYDIA.—You had no right to take or be married in your stepfather's name; but having done so it does not render the marriage illegal, consequently you are not at liberty to marry again.

HYDROPATH.—There is no remedy for the redness of the nose. It is caused by the extra thinness of the skin in some persons covering that prominent member.

DEATH OR GLORY BOY.—See reply to "George D." as above, which equally applies to your drawings and sketches. Of course you are at liberty to transmit them on paper to any of the illustrated periodicals.

MARY.—Four queries more properly pertain to a lawyer as being the best person to give you the desired information; but we may say that from your description of the case as it stands we think your recovery of any portion of the estate more than problematical.

CHRISTIANA.—1. We think you are wasting your time thinking of the young bandmaster. 2. The salary of a bandmaster is, we believe, about £2 a week.

ROBERT C.—1. The Irish notes dated 1819 on a bank which you say has failed are worthless. 2. The impediment may be removed by teaching the child to spell a simple word slowly and distinctly. 3. Castor oil and rum will tend to arrest the baldness. 4. Let the boy's hair alone. 5. The English army, including militia, numbers 340,000 men.

MRS. ZOE.—We regret space will not permit of our giving fuller answers to your modest string of twelve questions. 1. There is no "proper" height. 2. 5ft. 6in. would not be considered tall, but is above the medium. 3. According to age. 4. Ditto. 5. Avoid farinaceous food. 6. No. 7. Grey eyes, red cheeks, and dark brown hair would not constitute a blonde. 8. Use ground rice starch. 9. To promote the growth of your hair, mix together half ounce mercurial ointment, half ounce spirits of hartshorn, half ounce spirits of cantharides, half ounce oil of nutmeg, and six ounces camphorated oil. Put a little into the roots every day for six weeks. 10. Can't say. 11. Yes. 12. Indifferent.

FRED and CHARLINE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies residing in Manchester. Both are eighteen.

B. J. and E. T., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. B. J. is dark, medium height, fond of music. E. T. is fair, fond of children, loving.

VIOLET, LOUISE, LIZZIE, and EDITH would like to correspond with four gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Violet is eighteen. Louise is twenty-seven, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Lizzie is nineteen. Edith is fair, fond of children, loving.

CARRIE and EMILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Carrie is fair, of a loving disposition. Emily is dark, fond of music.

CONSTANCE and ALICE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Constance is twenty-two, fair. Alice is twenty-two, medium height. Respondents must be about twenty-eight, tall, fond of home, dark, loving.

ROSE and BERTIE, cousins, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Rose is nineteen, tall, brown hair, hazel eyes. Bertie is of medium height, fond of home and music, light hair, dark eyes. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-two.

G. T. T., a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, fond of home and children, dark.

GEORGE W., twenty-three, medium height, fair, loving, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, good-looking, brown hair, dark eyes, and domesticated.

W. F. W., twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one.

## ROMANCE IN BRIEF.

SEAS ultra marine,  
With fleckings of white,  
Fields tender and green—  
A day to delight—  
A kiss so sweet—  
Looks out at the door,  
There's someone to meet,  
She's met him before.

Ah! yonder he speeds;  
He's coming this way,  
A doer of deeds,  
A postman in grey.  
A moment of doubt,  
A tremor or two,  
A bustle without—  
"A letter for you!"

A crabbed old aunt,  
Severe on the maid.  
Would hurry, but can't,  
And thus is delayed.  
She gains the door-stone,  
A minute too late;  
The post has gone,  
And so has Miss Kate.

A handkerchief white  
The letter conceals,  
Till open at night,  
What bane it reveals!  
An offer of love,  
Of hand and of heart,  
A prayer sent above  
That nought may them part!

Skies starry and bright,  
Bells joyous and free,  
A wedding at night  
As grand as can be.  
Cross aunt she relents  
And blesses the bride,  
And while she repeats  
Adda thousands beside.

M. A. K.

CLARICE and BEATRICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen twenty-one and twenty-seven. Clarice is twenty-four, dark, fond of home. Beatrice is nineteen, fair, good-tempered, and thoroughly domesticated.

EVE and BESSIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Eve is eighteen, fair, of a loving disposition. Bessie is twenty, loving, dark hair and eyes.

HAPPY BILL, twenty-nine, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady or widow.

PAULINE, eighteen, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty.

VIOLET and POLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Violet is twenty-one, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Polly is nineteen, fair, loving, domesticated.

LOUIE and EVELINE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Louie is nineteen, loving, fond of home, fair. Eveline is twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-five, dark.

DAISY and MILLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Daisy is twenty-four, dark, loving. Millie is twenty, brown hair, and thoroughly domesticated.

ANNIE, twenty-six, domesticated, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

FLAVIA, twenty-one, a widow, dark, and good-looking, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy, about twenty-three.

IRENE, twenty-one, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age.

J. W. G., twenty-eight, a mechanic, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-three.

ALICE and POLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Alice is nineteen, dark curly hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

ADELAIDE M., eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, fair, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty, dark.

TOM, HARRY, and WILLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Tom is twenty, medium height, fair. Harry is twenty-three, blue eyes, tall, of a loving disposition. Willie is twenty-three, tall, blue eyes, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be eighteen and twenty-two.

W. H. D., twenty-eight, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a lady about twenty-four with a view to matrimony.

W. W., twenty-one, handsome, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady.

JACK W., twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

L. R. M., twenty, brown eyes, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

SARAH K., twenty, light hair, dark eyes, fair, wishes to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-six. Tradesman preferred.

JENNY and MAGGIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Jenny is eighteen, dark hair, brown eyes. Maggie is eighteen, brown hair, dark blue eyes. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-three.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LILIAN is responded to by—John, twenty-four, dark medium height.

LOUISA by—William, twenty-four, dark.

HENRY by—Lily, twenty-two, fair, brown hair, fond of dancing, domesticated.

FRANK by—Violet, twenty-one, dark, of a loving disposition, medium height, fond of music and dancing, good-looking.

HENRY W. by—Daisy, nineteen, dark, curly hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

DAN by—S. C., seventeen, tall, fair, of a loving disposition.

ROBERT by—Annetta, eighteen, dark, fond of children, domesticated, loving.

G. R. W. by—M. B.

ELLA by—Thomas N., twenty-three, dark; and by—George, twenty-three, tall, fair, fond of children.

ROSE by—Harry, twenty-two, medium height, fond of music, dark.

EDITH by—Andrew, twenty-one, fair, fond of children, medium height.

MABEL by—Alexander, twenty-one, dark.

MARY by—James, twenty-four.

T. H. by—Pet, seventeen, fair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

M. W. by—E. J., twenty-two, of a loving disposition, medium height.

JACK by—J. M., twenty-two, fair, loving.

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